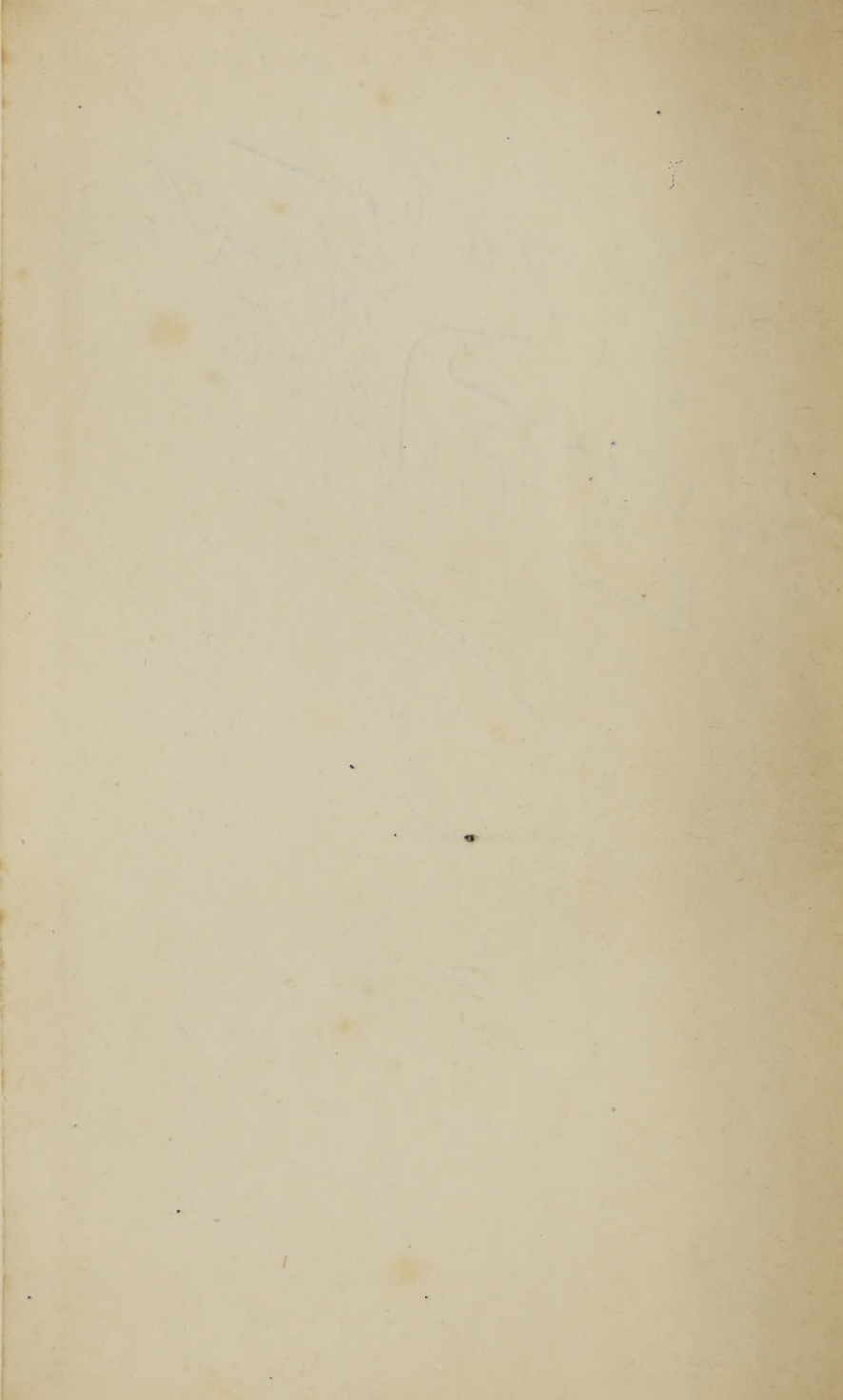


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KING CAROL,
HITLER
AND LUPESCU

First published July 1942
Second impression before publication.



KING CAROL II

KING CAROL;
HITLER
AND LUPESCU

by A. L. EASTERMAN

*Late Foreign Editor, "Daily Express";
Chief Foreign Correspondent
and Chief Paris Correspondent, "Daily Herald"*

Ursula and Felix Flicker

LONDON
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[Rare]

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For

MY WIFE

WARNING

SHOULD THERE BE any political impresario with the ambition to "groom" a star actor for a leading rôle in any post-war Balkan play, he need not read the pages that follow as the appropriate lines of a "Restoration Drama".

The design of my book is to present the background and the principal characters of a little-known East-European State, not solely to enlarge upon the peculiar interest which that remote country has so often aroused or merely to add new piquancies to the colourful figures who swayed its destinies, but rather to deal with them within the context of the major European scene and the inexorably evolving assault upon mankind which hurled the world of 1939 to its doom.

If any "motif" emerge from this book it is to reveal the peculiar conditions in which peoples and nations have been at the mercy of the foibles, the impulses, the irrationalities, the prerogatives, the ambitions, and the clashes of the Personages acting and interacting amid the unhappy old world now struggling in the agony of its death-throes.

Perhaps some part of this work will have a historic content. I can only hope that in so far as it describes Personalities and Policies there may be drawn from it a modest warning that the forces impelling them cannot survive in a world cleansed of reaction, chicanery and out-worn forms of rulership. To establish that kind of world we, with our sons and daughters, are yielding up our lives, our possessions, our hearths and our happiness.

I have one deep regret. I am able to acknowledge only anonymously the invaluable help and kindness of certain Roumanian friends. When Nazis are about, even the children in their cots are in peril. Some day . . .

A L. E.

London.

May, 1942.

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CHAPTER I

ABDICATION FROM TREACHERY

FOUR O'CLOCK in the morning of Saturday, September 7, 1940. It was still dark in Bucharest and rain was falling in a depressing drizzle which penetrated the greatcoats of the company of soldiers, armed with rifle and bayonet, surrounding a special train of three carriages on a siding on the western outskirts of the city. The men had been on duty since before midnight when the train had pulled into the siding branching from the main line on which the Orient Expresses, in the days before Hitler's war on Europe's democratic decency, had rolled luxuriously to and from the English Channel to the Black Sea.

As soon as the armed soldiers had taken their stations on the railway track, men in uniform bustled to transfer to the train the great stack of trunks piled up nearby. Each trunk bore the letter "C" in gold surmounted by a royal crown. The wet crunch of boots on muddy ground and the thuds of heavy luggage dumped in the last of the three carriages of the train, intensified the stillness of these early morning hours and added tenseness to a melancholy atmosphere. The men worked silently and the armed guards watched gravely.

At three o'clock in the morning a string of four motor cars drew up by the train. Their occupants, ten in all, alighted and walked quickly to the first carriage and disappeared within it. Three-quarters of an hour later, a single motor car drove up. A uniformed man jumped from the front seat, opened the door and bowed low as two men and a woman stepped out and walked to the centre carriage. There was a sharp order and the soldiers presented arms. On the stroke of four o'clock all the carriage blinds were drawn closely across the windows and the train moved slowly out of the siding in a westerly direction towards Yugoslavia.

When Bucharest had been left a few miles behind, Carol, ex-King of Roumania, was still nervously pacing the floor of the centre carriage. He looked dejected and ill. His face, normally florid in complexion, was sallow. His cheeks, usually full and chubby, were sunken and lined. The gaudy uniform with the flowing white silk cloak, emblazoned with the large crimson cross of Michael the Brave which he always wore so jauntily, to the delight of his subjects and the wonderment of peoples abroad, was now discarded. He wore a dark civilian suit. He "chain-smoked" as he walked up and down, bent and dispirited. He did not speak and his two companions, the internationally known Magda Lupescu, his closest friend and confidante of twenty years, and Ernest Urdareanu,

his Lord Great Chamberlain and most intimate counsellor, watched him silently and disconsolate. They, too, looked worn and were in low spirits.

All that day the train travelled at high speed westwards, through Roumania. It did not stop, but slackened speed slightly as it passed through the larger towns *en route*. Only the higher officials of the Roumanian main railway line knew of the passage of the special, heavily-screened train, its destination or its passengers. Towards midnight, the Yugoslav frontier lay only a few miles ahead. As the lights of Timisoara, capital city of the Banat, the rich wheat province of Western Roumania, began to glow through the darkness, the driver sounded the engine whistle to warn the station of his approach. The train slowed down to pass through. Just as it left the station platform and was again gathering speed, sharp flashes and the staccato cracks of rifle fire burst from the thick undergrowth of the steep embankments by the side of the railway track. Bullets spattered sharply against the steel framework of the carriages and crackled against the reinforced glass of the windows. The driver quickly accelerated and the train shot forward at full speed towards Yugoslavia—and safety. The would-be assassins, it was discovered later, were members of the Iron Guard, the Fascist terrorists of Roumania who, at the behest of Adolf Hitler, had brought about the downfall of King Carol, brought his realm to ruin and degraded it to the level of a province of Nazi Germany.

These were the parting shots that sped Carol the Second, Prince of the German House of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, and great-grandson of the British Queen Victoria, into exile, for the second time in fifteen turbulently dramatic years. The first time, in 1925, as the Crown Prince of Roumania, he had left his native land as the envoy of his King and State. In a few months he had renounced his right of succession to the throne, in angry protest against the dynastic restraints of a small Balkan Principality, whose Court, stiff with the formalities of a Ruritanian palace, had frowned upon the caprices and waywardness of a headstrong and amorous youth. The wranglings of politicians and the intrigues of courtiers had, in their turn, wrecked a youthful morganatic marriage of love, imposed on him a loveless royal matrimonial alliance for reasons of State and dynasty, and denounced his subsequent extra-nuptial association with a "Titian-haired Jewess" of Jassy, named Lupescu.

While he was abroad he had written formally to his father, King Ferdinand, declaring his "irrevocable renunciation of the succession to the Throne and of all the prerogatives appertaining to that rank, including that of membership of the Royal Family".

The amours of a Balkan Prince, the antics of a tiny and distant semi-oriental kingdom, the casting aside of a Balkan Crown caused only a ripple of amused interest over the surface of Europe.

The affair merely provided another titillating topic of a "royal sensation" in the world's scandal sheets and at the tea-tables of the world's suburbias. No political problems were involved. The Foreign Offices of Europe remained unperturbed. The Foreign Envoys in the delectably colourful capital of Roumania carried on their placid diplomacy unmoved by the fascinatingly romantic, but politically unimportant manœuvrings at the Royal Palace fronting the bustling Calea Victoriei, the fashionable main thoroughfare of Bucharest.

The Crown Prince Carol had, then, jauntily entered the special train that awaited him at the self-same station from which, fifteen years later, he was to leave as a dethroned monarch. There had been pomp and ceremony and high officials of the Court and Government to speed the wilful Crown Prince on his way. He was in high spirits and carefree, then, as the royal train steamed out of Bucharest. No one suspected that the gay young Prince would not return.

When the official sojourn abroad became dramatically converted into an exile, Roumania continued intact and unperturbed, sure of her sovereignty and her Royal House. No harm had been done. The abdication of her Crown Prince left few scars on the political face of the nation. The country was at peace. No external problems affected her security. There were some regrets, of course, at the departure of a charming and adventuresome heir to the throne whose escapades and perceptible intellectual qualities had, if anything, endeared him to a romantic people.

He left behind politicians whose ambitions were adversely affected by the change in the succession to the Crown and party alignments had to be re-adjusted. The unofficial "Prince's Party" dissolved into the political wilderness. But the country, as a whole, remained placid. A minor "palace revolution" had been quietly effected. The signing of a few parchment papers to be filed neatly away in the royal archives was all that happened to mark a purely internal change with a certain dynastic consequence. That was all. There had been no excitements in the streets. When news of the Prince's renunciation of the throne became known there had been no demonstrations in front of the Royal Palace, either for him or against his opponents. Everything had been pleasantly and decorously arranged. Roumania shrugged her shoulders, as it were, and continued its everyday business, unperturbed. The *affaire* of the rebellious Prince was entertaining, but of no great national moment. Internationally, the matter was of no consequence.

Five years afterwards, the ex-Crown Prince Carol recanted his renunciation of the Throne. He returned, dramatically, from Western Europe to assume the Crown of Roumania as rightful heir of his father King Ferdinand, whose death had placed Carol's son Michael on the Roumanian throne. Firmly and without much

ado, Prince Carol removed his son from the throne and himself took up the reins of sovereignty as King Carol the Second.

The exile of September 7, 1940, and its attendant circumstances were vastly different from those connected with the romantic episode which ended in the renunciation of a throne and exile in the early days of 1926. Vastly different, too, were the consequences. The shots at Timisoara marked the collapse of a state, the disintegration of a nation and the supreme humiliation of a monarch who, only a few months before, had ruled with almost autocratic authority and had been hailed, by a grateful nation, as its "Renaissance King".

At six o'clock in the morning of September 6, Carol set his signature to a document held, later, to be an "Act of Abdication" ending ten years of kingship which was, to him, not merely a prerogative of royal inheritance but a career, a profession and a high duty. Many a time during these fateful and troublous years he had declared proudly, "I like being King", and had openly avowed his enjoyment of the business of monarchy as well as of its trappings and glitter.

In its ceremonial manifestations as well as in the actual conduct of statecraft, Carol never failed to exhibit, and never attempted to conceal, the exhilaration he derived from sovereignty and the enthusiasm with which he carried out his duties as a monarch. He had an almost boyish delight in the job of being King and his zeal grew as the years brought steadily enhanced authority. His affection for the task of kingship led him to notions of royal autocracy which, in the end, brought him few friends and gained him many enemies. When foreign encroachment and internal disrupters finally bore down upon him mercilessly, Carol suffered bitterly at the prospect of yielding up his prerogative and, until the last moment, he resisted the surrender of his throne which was, to him, a precious and personal possession.

Carol was alone in his study on the third floor of the Royal Palace on the Calea Victoriei on this fateful morning of his last day as King. He had not been to bed. All night long, and for days before, a great mob had been gathered in the square below, howling execrations upon him. There were shouts of "Down with Carol" and "Death to Lupescu", "Death to the Jewess". Shots were fired intermittently by men in the green uniform of the Iron Guard, who raucously inflamed the crowd and urged it to roar threats against the King and his friend.

These hostile demonstrations were the climax of months of rebellious disruption, rioting and discord throughout the country. The Fascist Iron Guard, inspired and strengthened by Nazi encouragement, armed with Nazi weapons and emboldened by Nazi successes on the battlefields of Western Europe, had indulged in a

determined orgy of sadistic violence designed to destroy Carol, its arch-enemy.

The way to internal disintegration had been laid wide open through the triumphs of Hitler's mighty armies. As soon as Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and France were laid prostrate under the mechanised heel of the Nazi Fuehrer, in the tragic month from May to June, 1940, the Iron Guardists and the host of Carol's other enemies in Roumania took their chance. They were emboldened and violent in their assault upon the King's throne and authority when, forced by the pressure of Roumania's foreign foes, he broke his oath to maintain the integrity of the State of Greater Roumania, by surrendering to Soviet Russia the territories of the northern province of Bessarabia. They became bolder still and more violent when he was compelled, under the inexorable pressure of the Nazi-inspired demands of Hungary, to yield up half of the rich, vast wheat lands of the Western Transylvanian Province, and then, to Bulgaria, part of the Dobrudja, in the south.

Professing to be imbued by feelings of resentment at these "outrages upon the national heritage of our Holy Land", the Roumanian allies of Hitler embarked on a "crusade" in which blood and terror were the media of their gospel. In the fervour of the campaign of violence, they claimed, rightly, as Carol knew to his bitter cost, that he had surrendered to the enemies of Roumania the defences of his country and laid the nation bare to attack on its vital frontiers. They did not proclaim that they had connived at the emasculation of Roumania and accepted the sacrifice, at the behest of their Nazi patron, in order the more effectively to undermine Carol's throne.

On the pretext of the King's "crimes against the State" they sought and obtained allies among the dissident political factions which Carol had antagonised and thrown into temporary confusion. The wave of genuine national indignation against the truncation of Roumania caught in its surge many elements otherwise hostile to the Iron Guard which quickly seized the opportunity to exploit them for its own disruptive purposes.

Even the popular National Peasant Party, under its leader the acidly Victorian but sincerely democratic Juliu Maniu, joined in the "crusade" against the King and found itself in unholy alliance with its most bitter antagonist, the Fascist Iron Guard. The alliance, though entered into with a certain misgiving, was rendered easier to accept on account of Maniu's long-standing feud with Carol, whose association with Madame Lupescu the National Peasant leader resented bitterly.

The army itself became infected with the virus of revolt. Its younger officer ranks, weakened by Nazi influence and the Fascist "national" ideologies of the Iron Guard, made the army no

longer the loyal instrument on which the King could rely, in a crisis.

To add to the national confusion and to exacerbate the rapidly deteriorating morale of the people, Hitler had massed his *panzer divisionen* on Carol's north-western borders, ready to crash through by way of Nazi-enslaved Hungary. His bombers were running-up on the aerodromes alongside the tank formations. Troop trains were carrying assault divisions through Czechoslovakia to the Roumanian frontier. At least, reports of these movements were assiduously spread from Germany through neutral states. Their purport was clear and effective. The "nerve war" was in full blast against Roumania and the result was the one desired. Roumania was in a state of panic. Active in the confusion were the thousands of Nazi "tourists" who, with portmantaus bulging with the uniforms and weapons of the German army and air force, had swarmed into Bucharest and invaded the Roumanian countryside.

Against all this turbulence Carol struggled valiantly. He renounced Great Britain's Guarantee of Roumanian independence against aggression, a guarantee which he had succeeded, after much pleading and anxiety, in wresting from the unwilling hands of the Chamberlain Government a few months before the outbreak of war. Carol, too, had been obliged to appease Hitler and, in an attempt desperately to stay his hand, had offered him one economic "concession" after another. He abandoned the new Constitution which, only a year before, he had proudly inaugurated amid ceremonial pomp and popular acclaim. He sought to unify his nation by offering reconciliation with the suborned and traitorous Iron Guard; he offered seats in the Royal Cabinet to its leaders.

It was all in vain; the subversive movement against him continued and gathered strength. In a last desperate effort to maintain his throne and secure the peace of his realm, Carol called to power General Ion Antonescu, known to all Roumanians as "Caine Rosu", "Red Dog", an officer steeped in insurrectionary conspiracy, an associate of the Iron Guard, who, although he had taken his oath of fealty to his sovereign King Carol, had given ample evidence that he was pledged to Hitler, was ready to sacrifice the independence of his native land and to be the instrument for the degradation of Roumania as the south-eastern *Gau*, in the Nazi "New Order" in Europe.

There was much in the earlier career of this short, lean officer, with the high forehead topped by red hair (unusual in Roumanians and the subject of much speculation about his origin), to warrant a prediction that he might prove, one day, to be a turbulent subject of his King. The son of a middle-class landowning family, Ion Antonescu took the easier path to gain advancement in the army.

He entered the Cavalry School where the main qualification was the ability to buy and keep a horse.

At the School for Cavalry Officers, near Bucharest, he became noticeable for his eagerness to pick a quarrel. The chief butt of his temper was a fellow officer named Argesheanu, a man of greater ability, against whom Antonescu developed a jealous rivalry. Argesheanu, years afterwards, became a general and served as War Minister under Carol the Second. When Armand Calinescu, the Prime Minister, was murdered by Iron Guardists in September 1940, Argesheanu succeeded him. Within two months of Antonescu's assumption of the dictatorship of Roumania, the life-long jealousy of Antonescu was ended by the murder of Argesheanu by his old rival's new allies, the Iron Guard.

No remarkable exploits or evidence of unusual ability marked Antonescu's march to high military rank. His most notable qualities were arrogance, ambition and a high capacity for grumbling his way to promotion. He grumbled most when, as chief of the Operations Bureau, during the last war, he was not given the credit (which he claimed) for the successes of General Constantin Prezan, Commander-in-Chief of the Roumanian Army, and a brilliant leader and strategist. He grumbled when he was not promoted over the heads of senior and abler officers, for he made no secret of his own exceptional worth. He did not disguise his assurance that he was the ablest strategist and tactician in Roumania; yet, as Head of the Roumanian Staff College, he achieved notice as the officer who never delivered a single lecture or wrote a single line, for publication, on any military subject. His arrogance and impatience gained him general dislike in the army.

Antonescu was a "political" general, but his uninteresting career and personal disabilities barred his way from popularity and position in any of the "normal" parties. He found his opportunity in the Iron Guard. He became a surface sympathiser with its public policies, but a clandestine supporter of the underground subversive movement. At the same time, he professed an unalloyed loyalty to the King and exuberantly protested it. Carol made him Chief of the General Staff, but, as soon as he took office, the Great Grumbler evinced so much dislike of and intrigues against his chief, the Minister of War, General Angelescu, that Carol was obliged to dismiss him. When he relinquished office, he was bold enough to declare, "One day, I shall make those responsible pay for my removal from a post which I am the only one qualified to occupy."

After months of intrigue with Hitler, through the intermediary of Herr Fabricius, the Nazi Minister in Bucharest, Antonescu had secretly massed all the forces of discontent and rebellion in Roumania. When Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the leader of the Iron Guard, was slain by order of King Carol, the "Red Dog" quietly assumed the direction of the revolutionary organisation,

treasonably transferring his allegiance from Carol to Hitler. Behind the façade of Iron Guardist insurrection he organised and directed the mobs which stormed government buildings throughout the country, attacked the King's officials and howled in the streets of Bucharest, "Down with the King" and "Death to the Jewess". He brought his rabbles to the great square in front of the Palace in Bucharest to shout for the King's abdication. He intrigued with the politicians, the generals and the courtiers to aid him, on the plea of patriotic duty, to bring Carol to his knees.

The pressure became so intense that, at noon, on September 5, Carol felt impelled to summon his traitorous general to the palace to "discuss the situation". The King then realised that the net of revolt was closing in on him, but he essayed to stave off the imminent collapse of his throne and authority by appealing to Antonescu's patriotism and by calling on him to observe the oath of loyalty to his sovereign.

The interview was stormy. As if to impress the truculent general that the King was still Head of the Roumanian State, Carol had donned the full dress uniform of Field Marshal and Commander-in-Chief of the Roumanian Army. Antonescu's mob was already howling beneath the King's window and as the roars grew louder, the "Red Dog" became bolder. He had decided to give Carol the *coup de grâce* and told him that the nation demanded the transfer of authority to those who "represented the country's will". He did not then mention abdication, but the inference was clear and was not lost on Carol. There were high words. The King insisted on his determination to continue to rule. Antonescu maintained that the King's authority no longer existed. In the adjoining room two of Carol's Aides-de-Camp listened with growing anxiety as the altercation raged, and nervously fingered their revolvers.

The result of the interview was, in Antonescu's own words: "His Majesty the King, after a long, clear and frank presentation of the country's position, both internally and externally, entrusted me with the formation of the Government." The general professed his willingness to accept the duty of keeping the nation together, under the nominal leadership of the King, and agreed to consult leading politicians of all parties and army officers with a view of maintaining the national unity. He made it a condition, however, that leaders of the Iron Guard like Horia Sima, should be given key posts in any cabinet that he might be able to form.

This condition was an ominous indication of Antonescu's duplicity. Sima, a Transylvanian from the district of Fagarash, was a virulent pro-Nazi, who, as an unknown schoolmaster at a secondary school at Brashov, had thrown in his lot with the Iron Guard when it first adopted Fascism as its creed. He was slight

and unimpressive in build, but violent in manner. During his public speeches, which were always inflammable in texture, he became excited and cross-eyed, invariably with a disturbing effect on his hearers. During the leadership of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, he played only a minor part in the Iron Guard movement but when Codreanu met his death, with his principal officers, in November 1938, Sima pushed his way into the front rank of the underground Iron Guard organisation. He, too, was marked down for punishment as a rebel against the State and, with a few others, succeeded in escaping to Germany where he was not only given asylum but was taken under the wing of Heinrich Himmler, the Chief of the Nazi Gestapo, and trained in the technique of terrorism in the special Nazi schools set up for the teaching of politics through murder.

Professing a change of heart, he asked for and was given permission to return to Roumania, and, when Carol, in the turmoil following the collapse of France, created the "Party of the Nation", Sima advised his fellow leaders of the Iron Guard to enter the King's party and published a stirring "call" to the rank and file to give full support to the King in the national emergency. The text of his letter to the Iron Guard was:

"Comrades: The world is shattering from its very foundations. Soon there will follow a New Order among peoples and countries. Our nation must also be involved in this turmoil. To defend its holy soil at the call of His Majesty King Carol the Second and under his august leadership a Party of the Nation has been created as a Totalitarian Organisation intended to meet the events which may arise. In view of this I command all our comrades and friends to join, unreservedly, the Party of the Nation in which, as devoted soldiers, they will serve the King and the Country with faith and all their strength, will await the future calmly and with full confidence and will pray, day and night, for the good of Roumania and the King."

On the face of it, this letter was an impeccable expression of loyalty to King Carol. There were, however, phrases in it bearing the imprint of Nazi philosophy which Sima had doubtless imbibed in Germany. In fact, the text had been concocted with the collaboration of Herr Fabricius, the Nazi Minister in Bucharest, and had been approved by him before publication. The "allegiance" of Sima with his entry into the Party of the Nation was the Trojan Horse which the Roumanian King admitted into his citadel and which, in the end, destroyed him.

Antonescu left the Royal Palace in jaunty spirits; he had forced the King to appoint him President of the Council of Ministers. The news spread quickly through the crowd in the Palace square.

Swastika flags were waved exultantly. Green-shirted Iron Guardists cheered lustily, firing revolver shots into the air in their excitement. Antonescu drove to his office and for the rest of the afternoon was closeted with Horia Sima and other Iron Guard leaders. Old Juliu Maniu, the National Peasant leader, was brought into the consultations.

The King himself summoned General Paul Tederscu, General Mihail and General Baliff. He consulted George Bratianu, the leader of a dissident section of the Liberal Party, Professor Cuza, Mihail Manoilescu and General David Popescu. To them Carol gave a detailed report of the interview with Antonescu and conveyed the general's barely concealed hint that abdication might be demanded. The consensus of opinion was that the King should resist such a demand. The generals, with the exception of Popescu, warned Carol that Antonescu should not be trusted. They advised the monarch that the "Red Dog" was planning a Fascist *coup d'état* in the interests of Hitler and on his instructions. These warnings proved to be well founded.

At four o'clock in the afternoon Antonescu again presented himself at the palace and asked for an audience of Carol. He informed the King that he could form a "united national government" only on the basis that Carol would grant him dictatorial powers. Antonescu alleged that this was the demand of all the political party leaders whom he had consulted and who had given him their promise of support, on this condition. Antonescu's manner was even more truculent than at the interview at noon. He enraged the King who thumped the table at which he sat while the general remained standing in an aggressive attitude. The discussion lasted more than an hour.

Antonescu warned the King that "the whole nation is in revolt", that the army would no longer follow the sovereign's commands and that a "spontaneous" revolution could not be averted should Carol refuse to appoint him Dictator of Roumania. He declared himself unable to accept responsibility for the bloodshed and chaos which would inevitably result from such a refusal. Antonescu felt himself bold enough to assert that Carol himself would be the cause of the slaughter of his subjects, but he professed his continued loyalty and willingness to serve his King and recognised his ultimate authority. "After many hesitations," as Antonescu put it, subsequently, Carol yielded, having received the general's assurance that he would observe his oath of allegiance to his sovereign.

Antonescu left the Royal Palace with a Royal Decree in these terms:

CAROL II

By the Grace of God and the Nation's Will King of Roumania,
to all those present or to be present in future, My Greetings.
I decree

1. We give to General Ion Antonescu, President of the Council of Ministers, full powers to rule the Roumanian State.

2. The King enjoys the following prerogatives:

- (a) He is the Head of the Army.
- (b) He has the right to issue money.
- (c) He bestows the Roumanian Orders.
- (d) He has the right of pardon, amnesty and to reduce sentences.
- (e) He receives and accredits Ambassadors and Ministers Plenipotentiary.
- (f) He signs Treaties.
- (g) The modification of the Organic Laws, the appointment of Ministers and Under-Secretaries of State will be made by Royal Decrees which must also be countersigned by the President of the Council of Ministers.

3. The President of the Council of Ministers will have authority to solve all other problems concerning the State.

Given at Bucharest, the 5th day of September, 1940.

(Signed) CAROL R.

The sting of that document was in its tail; the last clause gave Antonescu control of the Roumanian State. Carol's surrender was complete, for, as the rapidly developing events showed, Antonescu had merely provided himself with the weapon to strike down the King. What was in his mind was clear from his own apologia which he published a week later.

"During the day of September 5," he wrote, "I strove to form a Government able to handle the situation which was growing worse every moment. All my endeavours failed.

"Expecting this to happen and knowing the state and spirit of the country, I had suggested to the ex-Sovereign that every new situation demands a new solution. That was just a faint hint that, if the situation grew worse, it might happen that I should have to ask for his abdication."

Antonescu was back at the Royal Palace shortly after nine o'clock in the evening. The King, bitter against the swelling volume of treason which Antonescu had organised behind him and angry at his own helplessness, was reluctant to receive him, but he was urged to do so by Ernest Urdareanu, the Lord Great Chamberlain and Madame Lupescu. Carol and his friends had learned that, in his consultations with party and army leaders, Antonescu had emphatically declared that the King would not in any circumstances be

allowed to rule. Far from desiring to give effect to his promises to solve the crisis by collaboration with the King, even with the dictatorial powers he had extorted, Antonescu, under threat of future reprisal, had coerced those whom he "consulted" into agreeing to demand abdication.

When, finally, Carol accepted the advice to receive him, Antonescu represented that he had failed in his mission "because all to whom I went and asked for collaboration, would only accept it on condition that the King should abdicate". This was quite a nimble but characteristic falsehood. What had impelled him to this patriotic conclusion he described later in the following apologia:

"At 9 p.m. I was at the Presidency of the Council when I was informed by some officials that they could hear shots round the Royal Palace.

At the same moment I was informed by telephone that crowds had attacked the Police Building where three policemen were killed, that guns had been fired in front of the National Theatre and that the crowd was moving towards the Royal Palace.

My first impulse was to go and try to stop the crowds. Those who were with me advised me not to, and then there was nothing left for me but to carry out the decision of going to the King and asking for his abdication.

At 9.30 p.m. I was with the King.

After a long and dramatic discussion, during which I reminded him of all the wrongs he had done during the last ten years, I asked the King to abdicate. I granted him a delay, to think it over, until 4 a.m.

Mr. Valer Pop was of the same opinion.

The Royal Aides-de-Camp, whom I had consulted in advance, were of the same opinion as I was.

I left the King at 11 p.m. and I allowed him to consult with anybody he might wish until 4 a.m.

On leaving the King I asked to see the Voevod (the Crown Prince Michael) to whom I said: 'Your Highness, ever since yesterday I wanted to appear before Your Highness. The events which have taken place in these 48 hours moved so quickly that I had not a spare moment. The situation is very grave. Your Highness must not be worried. I can assure Your Highness that General Antonescu is ready to sacrifice even his own life for the betterment of the situation. Long live Your Highness.'

Unquestionably, the discussion was "dramatic". Antonescu, as if to challenge the King, had donned his uniform, complete with

decorations, but, as if deliberately to impress his enemy with the distinction between them, Carol had discarded his favourite military garb in favour of a simple civilian suit.

Carol raged when Antonescu arrogantly complained of the King's "wrongs" to the nation during his reign. He dared the accusing general to substantiate the slander. Always a master of emphatic and colourful expression, the King did not mince his words of denunciation and repudiation. He spoke of treason and sabotage of all his efforts to bring peace and security to his people whom he had found, ten years before, suffering and confused and disrupted through unscrupulous politicians and self-seeking, sycophantic generals.

Under his rule and in face of obstruction, Carol declaimed angrily, Roumania had found a new respect in the eyes of the world and had achieved a place of honour in the councils of the nations. He did not spare the rebellious general a stinging indictment of his treasonable allegiance to the foreign enemies of Roumania; he accused him directly of being the willing tool and instrument of Hitler into whose rapacious hands he was willing and eager to sacrifice the Roumanian Fatherland for his own aggrandisement. He accused Antonescu of fomenting the disturbances in Bucharest and elsewhere and of fabricating the pretext of national discontent with the established order, to advance his own traitorous designs. Carol, gesticulating and banging the table in his fury, his usually thick voice becoming thicker as he raged, confronted Antonescu with his knowledge that the whole trouble in the state had been planned and executed by the Nazis with the active assistance of traitors. He declared that Roumania, like France, Norway and Holland, had been surrendered to Nazi Germany by the same Fifth Column which had undermined and betrayed these countries to the arch-enemy of Europe.

Antonescu winced as Carol poured forth his torrent of impassioned accusation and, at last, begged the King's leave to retire, bowed stiffly and marched from the royal presence. When he had gone, Carol dropped into his chair, exhausted and distraught, relieving his nervous tension by smoking cigarette after cigarette. He hardly ceased smoking from that moment until six o'clock the next morning.

The Crown Prince Michael, Ernest Urdareanu and Madame Lupescu joined the King after Antonescu left. It was a sombre party. Wine and sandwiches were brought but little was partaken. Carol became calmer and showed great tenderness towards his son with whom he had the closest ties of affection. Michael related the words that Antonescu had spoken to him. It was agreed that Antonescu's design was to make a breach between father and son, as well as to induce the Prince to influence Carol to relinquish the Crown.

Lupescu and Urdareanu were of the opinion that the King's situation was grave, but Carol expressed doubts if abdication was the only way out and maintained his determination to resist the demands, backed by threats, that he should relinquish the throne. The young Crown Prince, deeply moved, pleaded to be permitted to remain by his father's side, whatever happened, but Carol counselled him to follow the path of duty no matter where that might lead him. Though he did not admit it, the King was quite evidently preparing his son for separation and his own abdication.

At three o'clock in the morning, Antonescu called again at the Royal Palace and asked for an audience of the King. This time Carol refused resolutely to see him. At ten minutes to four, the General sent an emissary, Colonel Elefterescu, with a letter addressed to "His Majesty King Carol the Second". It read:

"Sire,

I bound myself to defend the Country and the Throne with my past, my honour and my life.

I failed in my efforts to find the genuine and wise patriots with whom to form a new body for the restoration of the State and the reunion of Your Majesty with the nation.

Every soul is asking for the Abdication of Your Majesty.

Faced with this situation and with the unrest which I feel unable to drown in bloodshed, with the consequence of throwing the nation into civil war and thus opening the way to a foreign occupation, I feel obliged to submit to Your Majesty, also in writing, the voice of the Country.

He who will say the contrary will commit a crime.

But I must very seriously draw the attention of Your Majesty to the grave responsibility which will always burden the name of Your Majesty if you will not give immediate satisfaction to my request which I express in the name of the Army and the Country."

Elefterescu was instructed to inform the King that the ultimatum would be extended until 6 a.m. when Antonescu would expect to receive the reply "at the latest". Along with the letter, the emissary handed the King a foolscap sheet of paper, the "Act of Abdication" drawn up by Antonescu for Carol's signature. Carol glanced at the document and tore it into fragments. Outside, in the palace square, the mob bellowed.

Carol summoned the Crown Prince, Urdareanu, Lupescu and a few intimate friends. There was a brief talk. The King read Antonescu's ultimatum and declared that now he saw there was no hope of maintaining his authority, that he was abandoned and without support; he had decided to leave Roumania and to hand

over the task of kingship to his son. Michael hesitated, but was persuaded by Carol and Lupescu that his duty to his father and his country lay in continuing the dynasty as a trust to his nation and family. Antonescu lied when he declared afterwards in his account of his final interview with King Carol, that "Madame Lupescu suggested that the Heir to the Throne should be taken into exile. This was the last effort to throw the country into chaos. This criminal act failed owing to the Aides-de-Camps' pressure". In truth it was her persuasion which urged and finally convinced the unhappy Crown Prince to place duty to his country before affection for his father; it was to her pleadings that he yielded, though reluctantly and with distress.

It was five o'clock in the morning when Carol retired to his study, alone. He told his Aides-de-Camp, in the adjoining chamber, that he did not wish to be disturbed, unless in the most exceptional circumstances. The mob in the palace square had grown larger in volume and fiercer in mood. The howls were louder than ever and there appeared to be a general mood of anticipation that the final act of the King Carol drama was about to be played. The King had few friends in that assembly, "packed" by Antonescu from his Iron Guard allies and by the more violent elements of Maniu's Peasant Party.

Shortly before six o'clock, Antonescu drove through the Palace gates to the accompaniment of the shrieks of the crowd calling on him to "stand firm" and "Carol must not rule", with the usual imprecations on Lupescu against whom the hatred of the mob was concentrated in the ugliest fashion. In the King's ante-room, Antonescu sternly demanded entry to the royal presence, declaring that he had come for the King's final answer. The Aides-de-Camp whom Antonescu, in his apologia, had slandered by the false statement that they were disloyal to the King, replied firmly that His Majesty had given his command not to be disturbed. They barred the truculent General's way to the King's study.

Antonescu paced the floor angrily and it seemed, at times, that he contemplated forcing his way into Carol's presence. The two officers watched him closely and with fingers firmly clasped on the revolvers on their hips, indicated grimly their readiness to act should the "exceptional circumstances" to which the King had referred, suddenly appear.

At six o'clock precisely, the King's table bell rang in summons to an Aide-de-Camp. As the senior officer moved forward to obey the royal command, the other quickly extracted his revolver from its holster and held it behind his back. He continued to hold the revolver in this position while his colleague was absent and while he was alone with the Dictator of Roumania.

At 6.10 a.m. the Aide-de-Camp emerged from the King's presence. He held a sheet of Carol's private notepaper which he handed, gravely, to General Antonescu. The Dictator read:

"To my People,

Times of deep disturbance and anxiety are passing over my dear Country.

For ten years, since I assumed my place of high responsibility as helmsman of my Fatherland, I have striven incessantly, day and night. With deepest love I worked to do all that my conscience dictated, for the good of Roumania.

Now, days of indescribable hardship are overwhelming the Country which is faced with the gravest dangers.

Because of the great love I bear for this Country in which I was born and reared, I wish to prevent these dangers by passing, to-day, to my Son whom, I know, you love very dearly, the heavy burden of rule.

In making this sacrifice for the salvation of the Fatherland, I pray God that it shall not be in vain.

In leaving my Beloved Son to my People, I ask all Roumanians to surround him with the warmest love and complete loyalty, so that he may find the support which he will need so much in the difficult task which, henceforth, will rest on his young shoulders.

I pray that my Country may be protected by the God of our Fathers and that He may grant her the most splendid future.

Long Live Roumania!

(Signed) CAROL R."

Bucharest,
September 6, 1940.

The document was entirely in the King's own handwriting; he had spent his last hour as monarch in composing it himself, so that there should be no dubiety about the text. He wrote the document with his own pen so that there should be no possibility of forgery. Carol's political shrewdness had evidently not deserted him, even in so tragic and critical a moment and despite the emotion that must have overcome him. The wording of the document was, no doubt, carefully chosen and adequately weighed to translate the writer's precise intentions as well as his feelings.

The so-called "Act of Abdication", therefore, has a special interest and, if circumstances or events should render necessary a close scrutiny of its terms, the royal author's intention, that it should be construed strictly, will emerge. When consideration comes to be given to Carol's Message to the Nation (which is the only known signed State document left by Carol prior to his departure) it will be observed that the word "abdication" does not appear through-

out the whole text; nowhere is there any statement that Carol renounces the Throne or his rights or prerogatives; he writes of "passing to-day to my Son . . . the heavy burden of rule", but he does not ask the Roumanian people to accept the Crown Prince Michael as King; he does not refer to his son as King; Carol himself signs the document "Carol R."

Is the document of September 6, 1940, really an "Act of Abdication"? Does it leave the way open to Carol the Second to resume his interrupted reign, should time and events permit him to return to Roumania? These questions can only be asked.

Antonescu, however, interpreted the writing of Carol as an Act of Abdication, for he wrote afterwards, "I was presented with the Abdication of the King and at 8 a.m. the Voevod Mihaiu took the following oath of allegiance to the Nation, in my presence and in that of the Patriarch of the country and M. Lupu, President of the Court of Appeal: 'I swear allegiance to the Roumanian Nation. I swear to abide strictly by the laws of the country. I swear to protect and defend the State and the integrity of the Roumanian territory. So help me God. Mihaiu.'" Antonescu, anxious to make clear that the succession of Michael was no more than a formal act of recognition of the idea of kingship and that it carried with it no duties, powers or rights, added this explanation:

"I wanted to emphasise that, in the future, the Nation will always come first and not the King, and that the King will have the support of the Nation as long as he will not overstep the interests of the Nation.

This moment being a solemn one, for the Country and history, and a dramatic one because of what was taking place in the room next to the Throne, in the apartments of the former Sovereign, I found it appropriate that I should end this momentous act with the wish that: 'May God help the Nation, Your Majesty and myself.'

After these words I asked His Majesty King Mihaiu to grant me my first audience, during which I told him textually:

'Sire,

Now after you have taken the oath of allegiance you begin a new life.

The solution which brought about the present situation was the only one which could have saved the country, the Nation and the Dynasty. To the very end of my life I shall pursue two aims:

First, the moral restoration of this people from the chaotic muddle in which it has struggled for so many years and the gathering of all Roumanians around the idea of honesty, work and justice. I can assure you that I shall attain this result.

Secondly, the re-establishment of the Country in its eternal rights.'

This is the truth, in the chronological order in which the events took place, during the two days of 5 and 6 September. The *coup d'état* will prevent for ever the possibility that the reins of the State should again be in the hands of a regime similar to that which has been overthrown."

There was a good deal of "*qui s'excuse, s'accuse*" in this statement, of which the last tactless words could hardly have failed to cause pain to the young King. If Antonescu had, indeed, written the "truth" about the *coup d'état*, his assertion of his honesty is in striking contrast with his confession in the "Message" which, as *Conducatorul*, Leader of the State, (the title he assumed), and President of the Council of Ministers, he addressed to the country on September 9, 1940, after Carol the Second was already in exile:

"Roumanians,

For the first time in my life I had to deceive, to lie and to break a solemn oath by asking for the abdication of a King to whom I had sworn allegiance.

I did it to save the nation from a terrible humiliation and an inevitable and complete catastrophe. I did it openly, asking in writing for his abdication. God, you and history will judge me."

The self-confessed deceit, the lie and the breach of a solemn oath cost the Roumanian people a ruler whom, barely three months before, they had hailed as their "Renaissance King" and with whom they had celebrated the tenth anniversary of his "magnificent reign". They received in exchange a foreign master ruling a new Nazi province from distant Berlin through the Roumanian *Conducator* General Ion Antonescu, who, in reality, was a Nazi Gauleiter taking his orders from the Nazi Minister Fabricius.

Gauleiter Antonescu's first act was to abolish the Crown Council, as the advisory body of the State. His second was to announce that "Roumania has entered the political sphere of Germany and Italy".

The Bucharest newspaper *Universul* which on June 8 had published a fulsome article praising "Our Renaissance King" described him on September 7, on the morning of his departure, as "a degenerate epileptic and alcoholic, devoid of all morals and principles, con-sorting with his degenerate Jewish mistress".

Note.—The quoted statements of Carol and Antonescu, in the foregoing chapter, are translations of extracts from official and semi-official Bucharest newspapers of that time.

CHAPTER II

REBEL PRINCE AND LOVER

WITH THE DEPARTURE of the flamboyant Kaiser Wilhelm the Second of Hohenzollern the glitter went out of European monarchy. The world talked glibly of the "new ideas" which must inevitably follow the Great War of 1914-18 and pointed, significantly, to the tumbled thrones that lay about Europe as indicative of the "new conceptions of government" that must change the destinies of peoples and divert them from the worn-out dogmas of kingship.

The ruins of the barbaric splendour of the Romanoffs of Czarist Russia, the collapse of the autocratic Hohenzollerns of Imperial Germany, the break-up of the resplendent Austro-Hungarian Hapsburgs, and later the degradation of the Italian House of Savoy to the obscurity of the Quirinal Palace of Rome, lent emphasis to the view that the days of monarchy in Europe were at an end. The thrones that remained, shorn of the reality of power and reduced to decorative ineffectiveness, were regarded as symbolic of the decline and unpreventable decay of the whole monarchical system.

While, generally, the "world made safe for democracy" accepted as inevitable the disintegration of rule by kingship, there was, nevertheless, a tinge of regret at the disappearance of glamorous royalty. The spacious imperial days of the Victorian nineteenth century and the ornate grandeurs of those of the early "twenties" had not been erased altogether by the upsurge of democratic notions during the Great War or by their hopefully exciting developments after it. Beneath the surface there was a sense of loss of the intriguing personalities who wore the purple. There was a certain hankering after the trappings of sovereignty which lent colour to the affairs of statecraft and a sense of deprivation of the men and women bearing the "aura of majesty", always so mysterious and unworldly in their palaces and so magnificent in their parades through Europe's capitals.

A cloak of drabness seemed to be thrown over the public life of Europe. The Revolution in Russia, the new regime of the German Republic, the democracy of the young Czechoslovakia, the strange concoction of aristocracy and democracy that made up the New Poland, carried with them an impress of colourlessness. The Presidents and the Commissars were interesting and important enough to absorb men's minds, but they lacked the excitements, the mystery and the decorativeness of the regally adorned personalities whom they supplanted. And the world sighed, somewhat

surreptitiously it is true, for a taste of the departed glories of the dethroned majesties.

There was nothing intellectual about the matter but it was a "human" attitude. It represented a natural yearning for drama and spectacle and a kind of "escapism" from the dreariness of normal existence and its stresses. This longing for the spectacular has been held responsible, to some extent, for the rise and acceptance of Fascism in Europe. Hitler and Mussolini gave back to their weary peoples their inherent love of display. They revived the hypnotism of the uniform, the flag and the procession. They recreated the legend of the mysterious, semi-divine, all-powerful "master" whom pomp and panoply and glittering ceremony rendered awe-inspiring and mighty.

One of the weaknesses of democracy, it has been held, has been its failure to take account of the human desire for colour and to clothe itself in some outward garb that would satisfy this fundamental craving. The democracy of the United States has realised to some extent this necessity of escape from the drab through the pageantry, often exotic and fantastic in form, of its political processions, its conventions and the queer exhibitionisms of its "brotherhoods", societies and associations. The "parade" has become an integral part of American life. "Bread and circuses" would still appear to be intertwined in the shaping of men and their political destinies.

When there appeared on the European stage, after the Great War, the son of a still-reigning Royal House who revived the romance and excitements of royalty, the world seized upon him avidly, as if to satisfy its hunger for them. Men and women exhibited this same satisfaction, later, when Edward, Prince of Wales, threw them into ecstasies of delight with the glamour of his royal personality. But Carol, Crown Prince of Roumania, held the limelight alone when he made his *début*, outside his own country, as a kind of royal *jeune premier*, in the early days of 1926.

Until that year, little or nothing was known of him beyond the frontiers of Roumania, then an almost obscure, unimportant Balkan kingdom which had played a minor rôle as an ally of the Western Powers in their struggle against Germany and which had had restored to it, as a reward, great and rich tracts of Hungarian, Russian and Bulgarian territories which Roumania held to belong, rightly, to her. Whatever interest there had been in this small, east-European state was concentrated in the person of Marie, Queen of Roumania, whose sympathies for the Allies ranged against Germany had been the major influence in bringing her country to their side.

Britain knew her as the granddaughter of Queen Victoria through her son the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage to a Russian Princess. Marie was an intelligent, beautiful and dominating woman with

a highly romantic disposition, who acquired an intense patriotism towards the country whose Heir to the Throne, Ferdinand, she married. He was a quiet, easy-going man, of no significant character and, when he came to the throne, it was not he, but Marie, who ruled in Roumania. She bore her husband six children, of whom Carol, or Charles, as he was called in his younger years, was the eldest.

Carol proved to be a headstrong, wilful and restless youth who developed a sense of revolt against the rigid flummeries and complicated strictures of a traditionally Teutonic Court. There was little sympathy between him and his placid and dull father. As Carol grew older the lack of understanding developed into an antagonism which ended finally as an open breach. Ferdinand was the creature of the Roumanian Boyar families of whom the Bratianus were the most important and, politically, the most powerful. The Bratianus, like their compeers, were political masters to whom a reigning house was but the façade of their own power as the self-asserted, pre-destined rulers of the Roumanian state. They developed notions of hereditary semi-dictatorship based on feudal land proprietorship and mediæval notions of the privileges of the "master class". The Agrarian Reforms of 1920 clipped, to some extent, their powers over their peasantry, but they clung resolutely to their politically dominating rôle.

"It was a Bratianu who peddled the Roumanian crown around the courts of Europe and brought Carol's grand-uncle as the country's first king. The policy of the Bratianus was that of the Turk suzerains and Phanariot Greek concessionaires who had preceded them—despoil the land with artful greed. No country in Europe has been so corruptly manipulated and exploited. Baksheesh was the national watchword. . . . The finances were paralysed, the budget deficit mounted out of sight—and in the ornate streets of Bucharest money flowed like silk in the hands of a corrupt and chosen few."¹ It was in the days of the Bratianus' rule that the caustic comment originated—"Roumania is not a country; it is a profession".

As Roumania moved, with the infiltration of liberal ideas from the West, away from feudal tradition and in the direction of political maturity, there developed a resentment against the presumptions of the Bratianu "bosses". Embryonic democratic elements became restive of this family dominance which was harsh, reactionary and corrupt in its expression and activity.

It was in this context that the young Prince Carol emerged as an antagonist and the enemy of the circles surrounding the reigning king. His early upbringing, under their influence, had been stiff, formal and restricted, in the manner of the Victorian courts of the German principedoms. His education was purely dynastic in direction and rigidly conservative in purpose. His companionships were

¹ Gunther: *Inside Europe*.

strictly confined to the most select of the reactionary elements close to the court; they were dull and colourless. He was permitted few female associations. He was instructed on an unbending course towards rulership based on ideas of privilege, restraint in conduct and dynastic impeccability, with a rigid adherence to recognition of the rights, prerogatives and formalities of the court.

Carol's independent, naturally rebellious character caused him to develop a restiveness against these constraints and he felt impelled, as he grew older, to seek an escape from them. He found it, at first, in "liberal" ideas, then regarded as akin to revolutionary, conceptions aimed at the destruction of the established order. He was suspected of consorting with politically "undesirable elements" and with harbouring dangerous sentiments subversive of the Boyar state and its dynasty. He was even suspected of being a Socialist. The Bratianu clique went so far in their distrust of the young Prince's political notions as to apply to him, as a nickname, the expression regarded in those days, and later, as the worst of all opprobrious epithets. They nicknamed him *Carol Bolshevicol*, "Carol the Bolshie". When he was sent to the front during the Great War, his enemies circulated a report that he was responsible for and took a leading part in fomenting "socialist agitation" among the soldiers. When he renounced the throne in 1926 and abdicated his rights and privileges as a member of the royal family, he was credited with an intention to seek political ambitions and to stand as a Socialist candidate for the Roumanian parliament.

These suggestions were, undoubtedly, gross exaggerations of a youthful inclination to wrench himself away from the ultra-conservative narrowness of those who sought to shape his life. They were distortions of the naturally insubordinate bent of a young alert mind, eager to move along with the times and to examine new ideas. The suggestions of "Carol the revolutionary" were designed undoubtedly to discredit a rebellious and truculent prince who had exhibited signs of impatience with restraints and strictures on his natural ebullience of temperament and independence of spirit. Quite early in his youth, Prince Carol found himself in open conflict with the Bratianus and the other aristocratic families associated with them in "running" the monarchy and the state. The conflict became sharpened when there formed round Carol a "Prince's Party" whose ambitions were based less on personal loyalty to and affection for him than on a policy of political hostility to the authoritarian powers of the ruling and domineering Bratianus.

As the breach between the Prince and his father's court Camerilla widened, it became deepened by his resentment against the undue influence on his parents, particularly his mother, exercised by other Boyar families, notably the Stirbeys. Until his early manhood, there was a deep bond of affection and sympathy between Carol

and Queen Marie. She realised and was impressed with the intelligence exhibited by her eldest son; she understood his qualities and encouraged him in his tendencies towards independence. Herself of an affectionate nature, the Queen found a happy satisfaction in the warm character of the Prince. Supremely ambitious herself, she took pride in the prospect, which she discerned in her son, that Carol would prove a notable descendant of Queen Victoria and an impressive occupant of the Roumanian throne who would lead his country towards greatness.

While the bonds between Queen Marie and her husband, King Ferdinand, were anything but close, the ties and understanding between mother and son were firm and intimate. In later years, these ties loosened. Carol's independent temperament and his conceptions of personal kingship brought him into conflict with his mother when she essayed to continue her rôle as an authority in the state and sought to carry into the King's Council Chamber the influence she had exercised in the study rooms of the Prince.

The first symptom of the future estrangement between Carol and his mother and the climax of his feud with the court developed out of the reports of an unduly close association of Queen Marie and Prince Stirbey, brother-in-law of Ion I. C. Bratianu, the virtual dictator of Roumania and last holder of the supreme power of the Bratianu dynasty.

Bucharest society hummed with *sotto voce* piquancies concerning the intimacy of the interests of the Queen and the aristocrat. Malicious tongues wagged delightedly and added details of the liaison. In the narrative, the story reached the proportions of a delightful scandal in which aspersions were cast recklessly on the paternity of, at least, one of the royal children. Bucharest heard that the young Prince had arrogantly challenged his mother and even presumed to forbid her any association with Prince Stirbey. There were even more substantiated accounts of a violent scene with Stirbey when Carol, claiming the privilege of a Crown Prince, roundly denounced the noble courtier who, in turn, repudiated the right of his future king to meddle in his private life and heatedly upbraided him for giving ear to slander and malice. In the salons of Bucharest it was related that the angry young prince ended the interview by striking the face of the older man with his open hand.

The estrangement between the Heir to the Throne and the Court took an even more serious direction, with radical consequences for himself, in his relations with his family and his circle. The strictness of the royal house and the severity of his education and environment had placed him in a situation of virtual isolation from companionship other than that prescribed for him by his tutors and the royal entourage. Not the least of the restrictions upon him was the virtual deprivation of female society.

Carol was a healthy, even a vigorous youth. He had shown an aptitude and an enthusiasm for sport. He rode, shot and hunted. He was a skilful tennis player. He was by nature gay, though he exhibited tendencies towards moods of depression and introspection. He evinced a liking for company and bright surroundings. He was fond of music which, later, he developed into a real appreciation of the masters. He proved himself a keen student and read his history and politics enthusiastically and with understanding. He was inclined, on the whole, to be a serious youth, but he had sudden spasms of restlessness with sombre routine and longed to break away from it to the lighter scene. He became irked at the lack of friendships, particularly of young women of whom there were few, and those uncongenial to him, in his own restricted circle. He grew to envy the freedom enjoyed by his less exalted companions.

He did strike up a friendship with a girl of aristocratic family, but outside the "inner ring", named Marie-Angèle Polizu-Micshunesti. She was pretty, cultured and gay and the Prince evinced a keenness for and pleasure in her society. The companionship was frowned upon, however, by Carol's mentors, and measures were taken to end it. The frustration left a decided mark on the Prince's character. Not only did it intensify and bring to the surface his naturally rebellious disposition; it provoked him to an unconventional conception of his rights with regard to his relations with women. He was soon to give evidence of this.

At this stage, Queen Marie conceived the idea of an important political marriage for her son. Her choice of a bride was the Grand Duchess Olga, eldest daughter of the Russian Czar. The proposal found favour at the Russian Court and a state visit to Roumania was planned as the introduction of the Prince and Grand Duchess. The Russian Royal Family sailed, in the yacht *Standard*, from the Crimea to Constanza where they arrived on June 13, 1914. The match-making went astray, however. Olga and her sister Tatiana, under the influence of the monk Rasputin, had decided they would never marry, and laid a plan to spoil any interest the Roumanian prince might evince in Olga. They blistered their faces in the summer sun on the Black Sea and arrived at Constanza in a state of decided unattractiveness. Unfortunately, the blisters wore off, but there was another, more important obstacle in the way of the match. Prince Carol preferred Tatiana to Olga. The whole affair came to an abrupt end, however. War broke out and the Czar and his family departed for Russia—and doom.

During the German invasion of Roumania in 1918, the court took refuge in the small provincial town of Jassy. Life was generally dull in the conditions of war, with an invader, ruthless and oppressive, in control of the country. In Jassy, life was gloomy. There were few distractions for a temperamental young prince and little opportunity for relaxation. Chance led Prince Carol to the

society of Zizi Lambrino, a commoner. She was young, beautiful and attractive. She talked with verve and animation. She was good-natured and amusing. She sang and danced well and played cards. She was something entirely novel and fresh in Carol's life and he reacted immediately to the fascination of her companionship and that of the Bohemian environment in which she and her friends moved. The constraints of the court, harassed by the Prussian traditions of the Hohenzollerns, were enthusiastically discarded in favour of the lightheartedness, the pleasant society, and the careless rapture of Zizi Lambrino. Carol fell violently in love and was at no pains to dissemble it.

A thoroughly alarmed court frowned heavily on this unexpected and wholly undesirable liaison. It proceeded to thwart the Prince's designs which, he did not disguise, were matrimony with the commoner. Emissaries discreetly but firmly emphasised the impossibility of an association, in any circumstances, between a member of the royal house and one of less than royal birth. They were critical of Zizi Lambrino herself, although her reputation was impeccable. They underscored severely the duties of an Heir to the Throne to conduct himself in accordance with his dynastic obligations; morganatic marriage, they insisted, placed in jeopardy the whole edifice of the Roumanian crown and was an affront to the nation.

The covert menaces as well as the persuasive cajolery left the Prince unmoved; if anything, they induced an obdurate youth, with a new-found joy, to become still more obdurate. Not only did he decline to abandon the association with the attractive Zizi but he persisted in his intention to marry her.

The indignation of the court was shared to the full by the royal family. The King, normally weak and plastic, was bitterly hostile to his truculent son and angrily denounced his determination to break the pure line of the dynastic succession. Queen Marie, profoundly perturbed by the affair, and resentful of her son's disobedience, essayed other tactics than a frontal attack on the enamoured prince. At first she attempted argument, but Carol claimed the right to shape his own life. When argument failed she laid plans to frustrate the alliance through intrigue in which she was a master. She did not succeed.

The Prince had his friends and informers. He was on his mettle and he was a young man violently in love. He met schemes to spirit away the fascinating Zizi by having her well concealed. His meetings with her were clandestine and well planned. Pressure on him was not relaxed, and when it reached a stage that brought out the full volcanic resentment and irritation of the amorous youth, he resolved on a drastic and dramatic solution of the whole trouble, and determined to challenge the entire alliance against him—family, court and the dictator-politicians. Carol smuggled Zizi

Lambrino across the frontier into Russia and married her in the Cathedral Church of the Intercession of the Virgin at Odessa.

The marriage was no furtive, hole-in-the-corner affair. There was boldness as well as impish truculence in the Prince's decision to have the marriage ceremony solemnised with unquestionable legality and with full religious sanction. The highest dignitaries of the Cathedral Church of Odessa administered the marriage rites in open ceremony. The Prince and his wife returned to Roumania; he was in a mood of defiance as well as triumph; he was full of determination to face the storm of obloquy and hostility which, he knew, would burst over him.

He did not, however, anticipate the full measure of the fury which greeted the announcement of his *mésalliance*. Zizi Lambrino was, of course, not recognised as the wife of the Crown Prince. For a time Carol was denied access to his parents, and when he was received the interviews were violent. King Ferdinand was so furious that he ordered his son seventy-five days' close confinement in the small garrison town of Bistritza. Queen Marie indignantly accused the Prince of besmirching the good name and repute of the royal house and of placing the Throne in jeopardy. Tearfully, she bewailed the destruction of her hopes in her son in whom she had believed there were the attributes of a great ruler.

The Bratianus and the courtiers openly denounced the Crown Prince and accused him of something akin to treason. He was threatened with dire, though unspecified, penalties if he refused voluntarily to abandon the commoner he had married, but he remained adamant in his refusal to do so. The anti-Prince alliance thereupon resolved on more drastic measures to meet what was, without doubt, a serious dynastic problem. The jurists were consulted and instructed to find legal sanction to upset the marriage.

Prince Carol raged and uttered defiance, while the court proceeded determinedly to find the legal method to thwart him. He threatened to abdicate his right of succession to the crown, but his enemies were not deterred. The question of the validity of the marriage was put formally before the Roumanian Supreme Court and, within a year, the tribunal pronounced the alliance with Zizi Lambrino unconstitutional and illegal. It was formally annulled.

Carol, smarting under his defeat, and in a mood of petulance, carried out his threat to abdicate; he announced publicly his decision to renounce his prerogatives. The abdication was received quietly and little notice was taken of what was held to be a gesture of frustration made in a mood of helplessness. Time would cure, it was thought, a youthful infatuation. In the result, this view was found to be correct.

The constant and persistent harrying of opposition and intrigue placed a heavy strain on the youthful love affair. It grew steadily colder as the intriguers set siege to the Prince's affections by

cunningly throwing other young and attractive women in his view and society. The same people who so severely restricted his early youth now permitted and put in his path the most generous indulgences in these distractions which gradually corroded his relations with his wife and fashioned the laxity of his later life with regard to women. The marriage with Zizi Lambrino withered and, at last, succumbed; when the court returned to Bucharest after the war, Carol joined the royal house without his wife.

The family and the courtiers were patently, though discreetly, overjoyed at their victory and the Prince's note of abdication was permitted to remain unnoticed in the palace archives. Zizi Lambrino gave birth to a son, Mircea, and in the course of time, as the whole unfortunate episode faded into obscurity, mother and son were quietly removed to Paris where the generosity of Prince and government permitted them to live in decorous respectability, but forgotten.

This was the affair which brought the Roumanian prince to the forefront of the European stage. The story of the royal love affair and marriage evoked rapturous interest throughout the world. Here was a Cinderella romance—the Prince and the commoner—with all the ingredients of a fairy tale. At first, Carol figured as a legendary knight chivalrously defending his right to affiance the non-royal lady of his choice, in defiance of caste and authority; a king's son ready to sacrifice a crown for love.

The story, with its almost fictional characters, was just the kind to appeal to the jaded popular taste of the time, surfeited with the blood and tears of war and dejected by the storm and stresses which immediately followed it. The popular prints of two hemispheres wallowed in the novelette and found a gallant leading man in the handsome Prince Charming of the bizarre, musical comedy Kingdom of Roumania.

Some doubts about the flawless royal hero emerged, however, when the romance collapsed and the fairy tale ended in the Supreme Court of Bucharest. Yet, there remained sufficient sympathy for the young man to enable the world to conclude that he had been the victim of his lineage, high duty and powerful forces which he could not withstand.

In fact, the enforced desertion from Zizi Lambrino left a deep impress on Carol's mind and disposition. He became "jumpy", with alternating moods of profound depression and excitable exhilaration, exemplified by recklessness in his behaviour and in his relaxations. He was bitter. His mother and his more intimate associates now understood that his association with Zizi Lambrino had been really sincere and genuinely affectionate.

Queen Marie, in consultation with the Bratianus, resolved upon the familiar Victorian device to cure young men of a thwarted passion and by which they could be induced "to forget". Prince

Carol was sent on a tour round the world. He spent the larger part of his holiday in India where, in addition to his official duties, he hunted and played polo with the Maharajas. Reports reaching Europe told that he had acquired a fine taste in champagne and indulged enthusiastically in the distractions of the night life haunts of Calcutta and Bombay. He continued his tour to Japan where his rôle, as Envoy of the Roumanian King to the "Son of Heaven", was more serious.

On the whole, the long sojourn abroad had no beneficial effects on the Crown Prince. It certainly "broadened" the young man's mind; but it brought out and accentuated the less desirable elements in his character. He came to a belief in pleasure for its own sake and developed a certain quality of irresponsibility. The sense of "independence", naturally strong in him, increased his inherent obstinacy. The breaking of the chains of family and dynastic duty had the effect of making him assertive, even arrogant and impatient of authority. It made him unconventional in his attitude to life and towards his fellow men and women. It gave birth to a new conception of the Prince Charming who had threatened to "burn his boats" for the love of Zizi Lambrino. During his wanderings in foreign lands, many stories were told of the escapades of the heir to the Roumanian throne and these were the first outlines of the picture that the world, later, came to accept as the true delineation of his character—the "royal rapsallion".

In his twenty-seventh year, the Crown Prince Carol was still unmarried. King Ferdinand and Queen Marie, with the court and the politicians, were increasingly concerned about the question of the succession to the throne in the direct line. Relations with Carol had not improved; if anything, they had become even worse than at the time of the Lambrino affair. The change took place when Bratianu's secret service discovered an association between the Prince and a married woman, named Helena Tampeanu, wife of an army officer, born of humble parentage, it was said, in the town of Carol's evil destiny, Jassy. The woman's maiden name was Lupescu.

Carol met Helena Tampeanu at Bistritza, to which his father had sent him, in disgrace, after the Lambrino marriage, and where, after its annulment, he was given command of a chasseur regiment of which Captain Tampeanu was an officer. Friendships were close, even intimate, in this small garrison town. The Tampeanu family circle was noted for the good cooking of Madame Tampeanu, and Prince Carol had a passion for home-cooked food. "Family poker" was then the popular game in Roumania and a good meal was invariably followed by poker and conversation. Prince Carol liked this ménage. Madame was sympathetic with him in his troubles and she talked charmingly.

Nothing was done to interfere with the liaison. The Prince was "sowing his wild oats", the lady was safely married and the Roumanian code of conduct was indulgent in affairs of this kind. The court was not apprehensive; yet, the question of the succession was a vital one.

In the autumn of 1920, after his return from his world tour, chance or design brought a meeting, in Switzerland, between Prince Carol and the Princess Helen of Greece, daughter of King Constantine. That the meeting was not altogether accidental is suggested by the fact that the astute Queen Marie had brought about, shortly before, the engagement of her daughter, Elizabeth, with Constantine's son, George, the Greek Crown Prince. Politically, this prospective alliance was in accord with Roumanian policy for strengthening the links between the Balkan States. In the post-war Europe, Greece had assumed an enhanced importance in the Mediterranean, while Greater Roumania was essaying to achieve the rôle of the major power in an alliance of Balkan States. Dynastic alliance with Greece was designed, therefore, as a political move of significant import. The intermarriage of the heirs to the thrones of Greece and Roumania with the daughters of both royal houses was likely to make that move more significant still.

The Princess Helen was of a type entirely different from the Roumanian women with whom Carol had come in contact. She was pretty, in a quiet way. She was reserved and shy, even austere. She was tall and athletic. She exhibited good taste in literature and music. The Crown Prince was attracted to her and proposed marriage, much to the satisfaction of Queen Marie and the respective royal families. In March of the following year they were married, amid splendour and pomp, in the Cathedral of Athens. In Roumania the rejoicings were whole-hearted. The Crown Prince was popular with a generous, light, pleasure-loving people who rather enjoyed the spectacle of his long feud with the domineering Bratianus and revelled in his rebellious escapades, his love of exciting entertainment, his amorous adventures and his struggles with the palace manœuvrers. They liked his colourful personality, his youthful vigour and his volatility which made him a true son of Roumania, so different from the heavy, stolidly dull Hohenzollern princes who, hitherto, had reigned over them.

The marriage itself was popular, though the people were embarrassed and somewhat puzzled by the strangeness of the Princess's manner. Themselves of an exuberant temperament, they did not quite understand Helen's shy and reserved manner. They were puzzled, on the day the newly married royal pair made their state entry into Bucharest. The cheers of jubilation and sincere welcome to the new Crown Princess evoked no apparent response from her. She did not acknowledge the plaudits of the crowds and it was

observed that Queen Marie, in the carriage with the young couple, nudged her daughter-in-law, from time to time, to bow her appreciation to the crowds. The young woman was merely shy and unused to the triumphal procession and the joyous mass demonstration. But the citizens of Bucharest interpreted her manner unfavourably. The Crown Princess Helen never recovered the spontaneous enthusiasm which, on that first day of her arrival in Roumania, the populace was ready and eager to accord her.

The marriage proved not to be a happy one. The early months were idyllic enough. Carol, at first, was charmed with marriage itself, which he found to be a pleasurable anthesis to the hectic life of his bachelor days. His family circle was royally "bourgeois" and quiet. The rooms in the Royal Villa in the Soseava Kisselev, which he occupied with his wife, were modest; the princess replaced their more colourful, exotic furnishings, designed in the Roumanian taste, by the quieter styles of English house decoration.

Helen was a hostess of elegance and charm, but she restricted her circle to a carefully selected few and confined it exclusively to the men and women of aristocratic lineage and taste. She maintained the manner of the "Grande Dame" of austere royal family. She rarely "went out" and her relaxations were of a subdued character. She read and played agreeably, but she evinced no taste for the gaieties of Bucharest. In the royal pair's country home near Sinaia, life was even more quietly domestic and placid. The Casino attached to the bright and ornate palace of the King and Queen, nearby, was thronged with the laughter and careless gaiety of the gambling-loving aristocrats of Bucharest, many of them Carol's personal friends, but the Crown Princess preferred to remain in the seclusion of her small chalet in the pine woods, with her dogs, to tend the profusion of flowers in her garden and to sit on the smooth English lawn behind the house.

The novelty of royal domesticity began to pall on Carol. His private tastes were essentially bourgeois; he liked informality, with a good meal cooked by his wife, in preference to the stiff *banquets-à-deux* at which Princess Helen presided regally, with the impersonal dishes carefully described in French on a gilded menu emblazoned with the Royal Arms. As the freshness of marriage waned, the clash of temperaments developed. He was restless and ebullient; she was reserved and undemonstrative. He was agile of mind; she was stolid. He was gay in disposition; she was reticent. He liked the society of men and women; she preferred seclusion. He loved the play and a game of cards; her leisure hours were devoted to her books, the drawing board and the grand piano in the drawing-room. He felt happy in the company of plebeians; she was always the princess of purest blood—and proud. The distance between man and wife lengthened, the gulf grew wider. He chafed under the restraints of isolation

from his bachelor pursuits and friendships, and he became steadily restive with the lack of warmth at his hearth.

Before many months were over, Carol was again appearing in the homes and haunts of his bachelordom and seeking the society of the younger, gayer set in Bucharest. The secret service of Bratianu reported to him, and through him, to the court, that the Crown Prince was being seen again in the company of Helena Tampeanu and that he was paying marked attention to her. The salons began to whisper of the prince's indiscretions and to comment on the apparent estrangement between him and the Princess Helen.

Bratianu, in his rôle of national mentor and custodian of the dynastic proprieties, conceived it his duty to bring back the peccant prince to a sense of his marital and royal responsibilities. He did not shrink from re-firing the animosities which had, for so long, characterised his relations with the "turbulent prince". In this he succeeded. Carol not only declined to abandon his friendship with the woman of Jassy, he repudiated the right of the elder statesman to interfere with his privacy or to prescribe his way of life.

The quarrel developed with increasing ferocity and acerbity on both sides. It reached a critical stage when the Crown Prince asserted that his prerogative as Heir to the Throne was superior to and overrode the self-asserted rights of a would-be political "boss". Carol challengingly defied the older man and openly threatened that, when he came to the throne, he would destroy the power and influence of Bratianu and his associates of the Boyar régime. Bratianu did not forget that threat.

The birth of a son to Carol and Helen, in October, 1921, did not heal the breach between man and wife or between the prince and his enemies. Helen was fully aware of her husband's adventures outside his home. Deeply hurt as a woman and shocked in her pride as a royal princess, she drew more than ever within herself; her reserve deepened. To alleviate her sorrow she clung, almost desperately, to the child Michael. Carol himself displayed an absorbing paternal affection for his son, a love which grew to a passion with the following years, but it was not enough to restore the broken link with his wife. What had destroyed that link was not merely his extra-marital association with Helena Tampeanu, serious enough as it was. There was the fundamental discord of characters and ideas of life and this disharmony wrought what proved to be the complete irreconcilability between husband and wife.

The trouble between Carol and Helen deteriorated into a political issue. Naturally partial to political wrangling, conducted in the best tradition of Continental animosities, the "parties" were quick to seize the royal differences as an opportunity for

political conflict. The enemies of Bratianu found in them the chance to organise their opposition to the prince and his feudal clique and there emerged something approaching a "Prince's Party". Though, in fact, the Crown Prince had no direct connection with the movement which was less a party than an inchoate political opposition, its emergence considerably strengthened his hand in the conflict with Bratianu. Moreover, it made him more intransigent than he might have been, had he been without allies.

Not the least important section opposing Bratianu and, therefore, sympathetic to the prince was the National Peasant Party led by Juliu Maniu. Maniu was a devoted monarchist and an impassioned liberal in politics. His party was the real and strongest democratic element in the state. He held a sincere admiration for Prince Carol whom he knew to be possessed of high intelligence and ability. Maniu was a bachelor steeped in the traditions of Victorian morality; he was strait-laced in his standards of conduct and he viewed with sour disfavour the moral laxity of Roumanians generally and, in particular, of the aristocracy and the court.

In the differences between Carol and Helen his sympathies lay completely with the princess, and he decried energetically the prince's departure from the strict path of marital rectitude. He thought, however, that his errantry would disappear with the lapse of time and the acquisition of responsibility. In the end, he was defeated in this view and he was to become the future king's most bitter opponent. But, at this time, he held the prince's delinquencies to be sufficiently ephemeral to permit him to be his supporter against the Bratianu faction of whose reactionary and corrupt practices he was an uncompromising opponent.

On the other side, there was the rising movement of the Iron Guard, still, at this time, in its early stages, with a membership composed largely of youths and countryfolk excited by a policy of super-nationalism, with force as its weapon. The Iron Guard's first principle, however, was hatred of the Jews, against whom they advocated a quite blatant policy of ruthless physical repression and persecution.

The allegation had been widely circulated and was generally accepted that Helena Tampeanu was a Jewess on the side of her father, by name Wolff, later changed to its Roumanian form Lupescu. This "fact" provided the Iron Guard with a stick with which to beat the anti-semitic drum. Bratianu, himself steeped in the anti-Jewish tradition (his father Ion I. C. Bratianu, was the author of much anti-semitic legislation), was not slow, in turn, to exploit this weapon against the Crown Prince; the "dictator" encouraged the opposition which, under the inspiration of anti-semitic hate, made the personal predilections of the prince the corner stone of the fiercest diatribes.

The Lupescu affair became the focus of national discord and a political issue of the first magnitude. In consequence, the feud between prince and reactionary chieftain grew so acute as to bear all the portents of a national issue, involving the succession to the throne.

Bratianu's enmity—heartily reciprocated—was so intense that he contemplated boldly carrying it to the point of eliminating the Crown Prince from the dynasty. King Ferdinand, with whom the prince was now in open breach, shared Bratianu's views of Carol's conduct to the extent that he did not shrink from the possibility of disinheriting his son. The birth of the grandson, Prince Michael, made that contingency a safe and practical policy; the direct line of succession was secure.

Bratianu's opportunity to execute his plan to destroy Crown Prince Carol came in 1925, on the death of Queen Alexandra in London. Both by reason of the niceties of monarchical convention and the close kinship between the Roumanian and the British royal houses, it was clear that the Crown Prince of Roumania should represent his country and family at the funeral of the British Queen Mother. Queen Marie and King Ferdinand welcomed the opportunity to send their son abroad. They hoped that the occasion of a visit to London on a mission of high State significance might have the effect of restoring the prince's sense of dynastic responsibility and might provide such a suitable interlude in his routine as would induce him to depart from the unconventional and undesirable path he was following in the company of Madame Tampeanu who had, by this time, assumed her maiden name of Lupescu, after her divorce from Captain Tampeanu.

The solemnity of the mission and the contact with the British Royal Family, with its high ideals of royal rectitude and its rigid conceptions of the duties of a sovereign house, would, Marie and Ferdinand thought, have their influence on their son's mind. They considered, too, that this, the first occasion on which the Crown Prince had been allotted the rôle of representative of his state at the most important of the world's imperial courts, would likewise, by its very importance, make its impression on him.

Carol, however, was in his most obdurate mood and was suffering acutely under the persistent campaign of calumny and abuse with which his enemies had been pursuing him and which, at this time, had reached a climax of virulence. His relations with Madame Lupescu had been reviled to such an extent, opprobrium had been heaped on him so malevolently, that the affair had been made, calculatedly, the subject of an open scandal, the object of which was to destroy the repute and undermine the position of the Crown Prince.

The woman herself had been assailed without scruple or restraint. She was depicted as a wanton, an unscrupulous adventuress, a

woman of the basest character. She was nothing of the kind. Despite the assiduity of Bratianu's spies, nothing had been discovered which might cast the smallest reflection on her morality. Indeed, her reputation was impeccable. It was true that, since the beginning of her association with the Crown Prince, her marriage with Captain Tampeanu had been dissolved but, the dissolution had been discreetly arranged and had involved no unsavoury features reflecting on her reputation. Neither before nor during her marriage had there been anything in her conduct to suggest, even remotely, that she had been guilty of any indiscretion. That did not deter the Crown Prince's and her enemies from pursuing their campaign of slander against her and from imputing to her the basest motives of degeneracy.

Bratianu insisted that the Crown Prince should proceed on his mission to London. He well knew Carol's mood of recalcitrance with regard to Lupescu and he was determined to bring the matter to a head. The Crown Prince learned that Bratianu's purpose in pressing him to go to London was less honourably motivated than that which inspired his father and mother. The dictator and his clique had resolved to seize the occasion of the prince's absence from the country in order to complete the scheme to deprive him of his rights and to devise the means of procuring his disinheritance from the succession to the throne. If, they decided, Carol were to persist in his association with Lupescu, as they believed and even hoped he would, this was to be the pretext for his elimination.

The Crown Prince countered the conspiracy by refusing and persisting in his refusal, to leave the country; he did not propose to expose his position to be undermined by his enemies nor to leave Lupescu to their mercy. He was stung to fury, at one moment, when Bratianu had the effrontery, during a violent altercation on the telephone, to "order" the Crown Prince to leave for London within two hours. Thereupon, Queen Marie intervened. There were tears and pleadings, rather than appeals to duty; she begged her son to go to London for family reasons, at least. In the end, the mother prevailed upon her son to yield to her persuasions and Carol agreed to attend the royal funeral in London.

Carol executed his task with dignity and discretion. He was received at the British Court with the formal cordiality appropriate to an Heir to the Throne, representing a Sovereign State on a solemn occasion. There was little warmth, however, about his reception by the British Royal Circle; indeed, his British kinsmen were somewhat frigid. The Lupescu affair, with the estrangement between Carol and Helen, now nearly four years old, was not only public property; it was the world's best "human story" in which the popular Press revelled without stint and with gusto. The revelations concerning the Roumanian Crown Prince's personal and family life were greatly distasteful to the British Royal Family.

For the newspapers, the political implications of the Bucharest imbroglio were of no interest; the "royal scandal" was the thing that whetted the appetite in the editorial rooms and there was no dearth of copy wherewith to satisfy the editorial hunger for news of it. The Press was given ample material with which to "build up" the luscious narrative of prince, princess and "friend"; the Bratianu faction had been busy abroad, as well as at home, in the dissemination of matter, mostly false, calculated to foster the already well-established conception of the "royal rapsallion".

The Bratianus, the Stirbeys and their friends, figuratively followed the Crown Prince to London, which received many undocumented but colourful tales of his promiscuous philanderings, champagne bibbings, gambling orgies and other unsavoury activities unbecoming to the son of a Royal House. The tales emanated largely from Bucharest and they lost nothing in transit between Roumania and London. The Crown Prince, who took his place among the other royalties in the solemn funeral procession of Queen Alexandra, was thus well established in the British public mind as a weak-willed, irresponsible, scatter-brained, pleasure-loving, dissolute, immoral breaker of a father's and mother's heart, a deserter from his wife for the illicit love of a mistress no less promiscuous than her lover. The picture hardly changed at all, until he returned to London, thirteen years later, as the honoured king of an important state at a time when Europe trembled on the edge of imminent war.

Twenty-four hours after Carol left Bucharest for the royal funeral in London, Madame Lupescu left by a different route, for Paris. Her departure was pre-arranged between her and the prince, and was planned in such secrecy that the spies of Bratianu, who had her under constant surveillance, were outwitted. When he discovered that she had eluded him, Bratianu set the Roumanian secret service on her trail. She was discovered living quietly in Paris while Carol was performing his duties in London.

As his stay in London approached its close, Lupescu moved to Milan, where she was joined by Carol. Her movements were made in conditions of strict secrecy. She travelled under an assumed name. Only two or three of Carol's most trusted friends and confidants were privy to her and the prince's plans. But Bratianu's agents were assiduous and alert and they soon discovered the assignation in Italy. Instead of respecting the privacy of the Heir to the Throne, for reasons of State if not of decency, Bratianu proceeded to make a public disclosure of Carol's secret rendezvous with Lupescu. He instructed Roumanian government officials to reveal the whole affair to certain journalists in Bucharest, carefully selected to ensure the widest publicity abroad and at home. The official news services were, likewise, brought into action. Not only did he not scruple to

disclose the exact place of meeting in Milan, but he added particulars of the errant couple's life there, with the design of showing that they were indulging in a life of orgiastic gaiety at the expense of Roumania's hard-pressed taxpayers. As usual, these accretions to the plain facts were, at least, grossly exaggerated.

Carol was, indeed, fond of good living, but there was a vast distance between that and the kind of life in which, Bratianu alleged, the Crown Prince and Lupescu were indulging. They ate well, in the smartest restaurants. They did not dance because, as Carol himself once said, the one flaw in his education was the omission to teach him to dance, and he never ventured it. It was characteristic of him that in later years he insisted on dancing as an important element in the education of his own son Michael. Carol and Lupescu attended the theatre and such night entertainments as Milan afforded them. But the allegations of exotic and riotous abandon with which the journalists, at Bratianu's dictation and through their own imaginative processes, painted the picture of the love affair in Milan were deliberate falsifications and altogether fantastic.

Bratianu's purpose was clear. He had determined to put into execution his plan finally to get rid of the intransigent Crown Prince. Taking advantage of the unconcealed anger of Carol's father at the latest development of the Lupescu scandal, Bratianu had no difficult task in inducing King Ferdinand peremptorily to command Carol, to return at once to Roumania. Attached to the order was one condition which the wily dictator succeeded in persuading the King to impose—Carol must return without Lupescu. Added to the condition was a threat—unless the Crown Prince obeyed the command, immediately and without equivocation, measures would be taken to deprive him of the succession to the throne.

Bratianu knew well enough that an ultimatum to a prince with the temperament of Carol, who, once before, had met an intrusion on his private life by an offer of abdication, could only result in a further truculence; this was precisely the weapon the old man desired to wield in order to deal Carol the *coup de grâce*. He was not mistaken. Carol replied to his father's command, and the condition attached to it, with a blank refusal to obey and an offer to renounce the throne, unless he were left himself to decide his way of life and to follow it in his own way. Bratianu thereupon acted promptly and without hesitation. A special Crown Council was summoned in Bucharest. The government, with the King's approval, placed before the Council the Crown Prince's misdemeanours, his father's command, and the refusal to obey; the Government also placed a proposal to abrogate Carol's rights before the august tribunal which, alone, under the Constitution, could determine any question concerning the succession. The Crown Council accepted the proposal. On December 31, 1925, a communiqué was issued:

"His Royal Highness Prince Carol, the Heir to the Throne, having informed His Majesty in writing of his irrevocable renunciation of the succession to the Throne and of all the prerogatives appertaining to that rank, including that of membership of the Royal Family, His Majesty the King felt compelled to accept this renunciation and to summon a Council at the Castle of Pelesch to-day. In communicating his high decision, His Majesty appealed to all the men of eminence in the country who were present to help him in its execution, and in the proclamation of his grandson, Prince Michael, as Heir to the Throne. In view of assurances to this effect received from all present, the Parliament has been convened for Monday, January 4."

On January 4, 1926, the Roumanian Parliament enacted the formal measure depriving the Crown Prince of his rights of inheritance.

Carol, angry and embittered, retired into exile, with the intention never to return to his native country. He left behind him in Roumania not merely a sense of loss of an exhilarating royal personality, but of genuine regret that the country had been deprived of a vigorous and constructive mind that had initiated and created important works for the nation. For Carol, even as a young man, had many fine achievements to his credit. As early as 1913 he had founded the Boy Scout Movement with an initial membership of 10,000. By the next year the organisation had grown to 100,000 members, and when he left for exile he was the leader of a great national movement of 250,000 youths from the ages of 8 to 18 years. In 1918 he founded the Roumanian Federation of Sports designed to foster every form of athletic activity for men between the ages of 18 to 30.

He took a leading part in the movement to modernise the Roumanian Army. He was the prime mover in introducing mountain troops. But his greatest and proudest achievement in this field was the introduction to Roumania of aviation as an integral part of the Roumanian military machine. He founded the first Roumanian Air Corps and, to equip himself for the task, made a study and acquired practical experience of flying. His keenness in this new branch of science involved him in trouble. As the pioneer of aviation and head of the first Commission charged with the purchase of aeroplanes, he evinced a preference for machines of British manufacture over the products of France which was, then, the chief supplier of military equipment for Roumania. A purchasing committee, under Carol's direction, bought a number of aeroplanes in England, but at the first demonstration in Roumania there was an unfortunate accident. The first machine to take the air crashed. The Government of Bratianu (incited by French interests competing with the British) immediately charged Carol and his colleagues with

purchasing faulty machines and with accepting bribes from British manufacturers to purchase their products, in preference to the French. Carol indignantly repudiated the charges, demanded an investigation—and the accusations were dropped.

Carol's happiest creation was the Cultural Foundation of Roumania. He enlisted the co-operation of the progressive intellectuals to develop and extend Roumanian culture. Through the Foundation he established a Printing and Publishing House for the distribution of all branches of Roumanian and foreign literature, especially the classics, ancient and modern. He directed the production and distribution of more elementary books and periodicals for the educational improvement of the peasantry, hitherto deprived of even rudimentary tuition and largely illiterate.

Carol left behind him, therefore, a great reservoir of supporters and admirers among the youths, the young men and the progressive-minded intellectuals. They formed the solid basis of popularity, the existence of which his enemies denied, but which was real. This was the firm background of support which enabled him, afterwards, to return to his native country and to be warmly welcomed as its King.

CHAPTER III

RESTLESS EXILE

THE EXILED Crown Prince of Roumania took up residence in France. Paris and the Riviera saw a good deal of him as he moved from one exclusive restaurant and night club to the other, always accompanied by Madame Lupescu and sometimes by a particularly intimate friend or two. Their penchant for cards, true to the Roumanian tradition, was satisfied by occasional appearances in the Casinos; when they played, the stakes were invariably moderate. Their social circle was severely restricted. The ex-Crown Prince played tennis. The lady moved about more unobtrusively. Their companionship was constant and apparently devoted and there was an obvious desire on their part for a retirement as decorous as possible. They were, however, baulked of their hope to secure reasonable privacy.

The "royal philanderer", the abdicated Crown Prince, the rebellious royal son was, by now, a figure of international repute. More unfortunately for them both, he and the "lady in the case" had become the food for the always sensation-hungry mass Press of Europe and America. Carol and Lupescu had no respite from the glare of publicity. Their movements, their amusements, and their associations were a never failing source of "reader-interest". They were "news", whatever they did or wherever they were seen. The

"news hawks" of two continents followed them assiduously, never let them out of sight and pounced upon them incessantly. They reported the exiles' activities to the smallest and most insignificant details, which were imaginatively given an importance and elaborated to make "good copy". Whether walking, in the tennis courts, in the night clubs, or at the Casino—they were shadowed unceasingly and "written up".

It was invariably the same story, variably dished up—Carol and Lupescu leading a life of careless gaiety and excitement. Sometimes, the narrative was given a more original turn—divorce between Carol and the Princess Helen, to pave the way for marriage with Madame Lupescu. Sometimes, there were colourful tales of "secret meetings" with Roumanian royalties and politicians and "plots for a *coup d'état*" in Roumania. At other times, there were stories from "authoritative sources" of the ex-Crown Prince's "mysterious departures" from his usual habitats and more or less plain suggestions that his sudden and dramatic reappearance in Bucharest was to be expected "at any moment".

The main theme, however, was the "wild life" of the exiled pair and, like Bratianu's allegations concerning the rendezvous in Milan, this was considerably less than the truth. Carol and Lupescu lived in adequate luxury. They enjoyed such delights as Paris and the Riviera held for all people supplied with ample means. Added together, all the facts in the steady flow of accounts of their relaxations did not amount to anything more than that; the innuendoes and the "colour" made up the balance, to their detriment. In the result, the portraiture of the "royal playboy" was sharply delineated and sedulously filled in—and remained firm in the public mind.

As it stood, it was too good a "story" to spoil by a more sober appraisal of the man and his life or of the influences which had brought about this peculiar, and apparent end to the promising career of a prospective monarch in Europe. Had there been such an appraisal, it would have been observed that a man of Carol's character and ability would not have discarded a crown without the deepest motives and that it was not solely, if at all, for reasons of lightheartedness, mere sybaritism, far less of irresponsible promiscuity in relations with women, that he threw over the prospects and ambitions of kingship. It would have been discovered that Carol was a man of quite exceptional capacity as a politician, that he was of more than average intelligence and that he was ambitious.

He would have been revealed as a man who could not be intellectually content to remain in enforced obscurity and to limit his horizon to the narrowness of the gay life of non-responsibility. But such a view of him would not have made him such a "good story" and would have robbed the avid public of a "colourful personality" whom it was easier to put in the pillory than to applaud. It was not that Carol was an impeccable character; he was anything but

that. His private life, as he fashioned it, was open to and worthy of the severest criticism and reproach. As a man and a prince he stood indicted and guilty of inexcusable behaviour with regard to his marital obligations, and of a way of living contrary to the strict standards required of men born to a position of royal authority, involving the dignity of a throne and the respect of a nation.

Such criticism of Carol precluded, however, the scurrilities with which his life in Bucharest, and especially in exile, was assailed and with which he and Lupescu were villified. There has never been any evidence to substantiate the opprobrious epithet of "royal rapsallion" that came to be applied to him. Nor was the title of "royal philanderer" any more justified.

In his life, three women played a major part, other than that of the natural affinity between mother and son. He married, legally and openly, Zizi Lambrino, the commoner. The pressure of strong and wily politicians, coupled with the influence of a strong-willed mother upon a young and impressionable man, wrecked that marriage. He married, for reasons of State, the Princess Helen of Greece. There was a clash of temperaments, not uncommon in even less exalted strata than theirs, and the marriage failed. His association with Madame Lupescu has remained unbroken for nearly twenty years. It has been marked on both sides by a constancy and a loyalty which neither the calumnies of a host of ruthless enemies nor the ill-conceived and inquisitorial pursuit by the delvers into scandal, for its own sake, have succeeded in diminishing or even affecting. Moreover, the microscopic scrutiny under which the lives and conduct of Carol and Lupescu have been examined during these long and difficult years has revealed no suggestion of disloyalty, on one side or the other. Certainly there has been no evidence whatever of any transfer of affection or interest by either party. This unbroken association, therefore, discounts, at least, the imputation of promiscuity on the part of Carol. Indeed, the fact of its persistence, in the face of the many and continuous efforts to destroy it, is a marked tribute to a phase of Carol's character which his detractors have either failed to observe, or deliberately declined to indicate. There can be little doubt that Carol, blameworthy though he may be in respect of many major defects of character and conduct, has on the whole, been much maligned. On Lupescu's part, no breath of suspicion has ever tarnished her reputation as a loyal friend of the man with whom she has allied her fortune either when he was a Crown Prince in exile, or a reigning monarch.

Carol could not settle down to the prospect of an indefinite and purposeless life of leisure and idleness. The first flush of freedom from the excitements of court and political intrigue, even though these had disturbed his peace and caused him bitterness, gradually paled. The pleasures of the social whirl, the card table and the other diversions from idleness did not satisfy his need for mental

activity. They palled. He had been reared in an atmosphere where politics was life and he was at the very centre of it; the destiny of a nation revolved round him.

From his chateau at Coesmes, near Paris, or his Riviera hotel, he watched, at a distance, the European scene evolve from the nausea of the battlefields, through the disappointments of the peace, to the dismays and conflicts of the post-war reconstruction; he saw the changing face of old nations, the birth pangs of the new, the childhood writhings of the Weimar Republic, the wranglings over Germany's Reparation penalties, the struggles at the League of Nations at Geneva, the plague of unemployment over the whole continent, the emergence of a thing called Fascism in Italy under a strange man called Mussolini, the faint outline of a stranger figure called Hitler, the withdrawal of the United States into isolation from the squabbles of the Old World.

In all these matters his country was intimately concerned. In Paris, in his house in the *Chaussée d'Antin*, he was at the focal point on which all these grave affairs converged, in one form or another. He, the politically-conscious Carol, whom birth had designed for a leading rôle in the evolution of his nation within and as part of European development, was isolated, an exile, unemployed. He chafed under his inactivity and the lack of intellectual diversion in the field in which he had been born and schooled. He longed to return to his post.

Whether or how that return could take place was, then, by no means clear, but Carol kept himself in mental trim by devoting himself to the study of international politics, constitutional history and democratic institutions on the Western model. He observed closely the evolution of the European drama round him. He felt that time and events must combine to provide the opportunity whereby he would be called back to a serious duty and to work. In the process of preparation, Carol sobered down into real intellectual maturity and into real political understanding, with a sound appreciation of men and affairs. Had they taken the trouble to inquire or been willing to reconsider their estimate of him, those who were so fond of elaborating the "royal rapsallion" nonsense would have discovered that now, at all events, a new Carol had emerged—or perhaps it was the old Carol who had shaken off, at last, the frustrations and immaturities of youth.

In July, 1927, Carol's father, King Ferdinand, died. In accordance with the Crown Council's proclamation of December 31, 1925, the six-year-old Michael, Carol's son born of Helen of Greece, was proclaimed King under a Regency, during his minority, comprising as its chief members, Carol's brother Nicholas, the Roumanian Patriarch Miron Christea and Georges Buzdugan, President of the Supreme Court. These men were, of course, no more than a dignified but formal façade. In themselves, they were of small account.

The Prince Nicholas was a youth without any marked ability and without any of the sterner qualities revealed by Carol in his early years. The only affinity between the two brothers was their youthful love of the lighter life. In this respect, Nicholas even excelled his elder brother, but he had not Carol's compensating strength of character. The Patriarch Miron Christea was an elderly cleric whose long white beard and rich sacerdotal garments made him an imposing ceremonial figure in the Cathedral of Bucharest. He was a politician, too, of deeply conservative hue, but he owed his exalted position more to his allegiance to reactionary ideas than to his contribution to them or to affairs generally. Buzdugan was the "strong man" of the Regency, but his function was more constitutional than practical. The real authority in the government continued to reside in and to be held by Bratianu and his faction, of which Prince Barbu Stirbey, friend and intimate confidant of Queen Marie, was the most important member.

Under the régime of Bratianu and the Regency, Roumania entered a phase of maladministration as bad as any in the long history of that country's misrule. The national economy deteriorated; poverty and discontent were rampant. The lands tilled by the poverty-stricken peasants decayed for lack of means of development; their produce rotted for want of markets. In the towns, unemployment ravaged the populations. Taxation imposed impossible burdens. Education was allowed to decay to near-vanishing point. Officialdom and politics were never so corrupt, even among a people whose state was derided as "not a country; it is a profession".

Political wrangling grew more virulent than ever. The malefactions of Bratianu and the Regency government carried with them the growth and spread of opposition whose leading exponent was the National Peasant leader, Iuliu Maniu. The confusion in the nation and the discontents arising from it made him the most powerful figure in the state, next to Bratianu, and between them there developed a feud, bitter and intense.

As Maniu gathered strength, and internal conditions grew worse, many among his followers talked significantly of the exiled ex-Crown Prince in Paris and the Riviera. There were many openly expressed regrets at his absence in these difficult days; there were suggestions of the need of a strong personality who might cohere the disintegrating elements of the state and focus the national respect. This movement grew and emissaries from Roumania began to be observed visiting the chateau of the exile in France.

Maniu himself was not unfavourably disposed to the suggestion that Carol, sooner or later, might be invited to return to Roumania but, at this stage, he preferred to make political use of the growing desire to see the ex-Crown Prince back again rather than actively to encourage it. The exclusion of Carol was the work of Bratianu, the arch-enemy; the possibility of the exile's return became, there-

fore, a suitable political weapon for Maniu. The approval of the idea for Carol's restitution was, nevertheless, basically genuine, on the Peasant Party leader's part, but there were radical obstacles, in his view, against its execution. The most deep-rooted of Maniu's objections was the question of the Princess Helen.

The ascetic Victorian bachelor was uncompromising in this, as he was in all other political questions. He held the strongest opinions on morality and, especially, of the strictness of the marriage code. In this he was a rare, if not an anachronistic character, in Roumania. He held that reconciliation with Helen must be, if not an essential prelude to, at least a guaranteed accompaniment of Carol's return to his place in the state. He was firm, also, in his requirement that the ex-Crown Prince's unconventional association with Madame Lupescu should cease. Apart from these primary considerations, Maniu believed that the time for Carol's return had not yet come. In any event, such a move during Bratianu's lifetime, Maniu believed, would inevitably have worsened the already chaotic conditions in Roumania and might even have involved the country in civil strife. Maniu, as a constitutionalist and a liberal, could not encourage such a possibility, far less participate in it.

Maniu's insistence on a reconciliation with the Princess Helen and the abandonment of Lupescu as the pre-requisite condition of Carol's reinstatement, even of his return to Roumania, led, eventually, to an irremediable breach between the two men whom, otherwise, mutual personal respect and common political understanding bound closely together. Eleven years later, when Carol was seated firmly on the throne and Maniu fretted bitterly in the political wilderness, refusing and being refused a place in the government because of his intransigent objections to the presence of Madame Lupescu in the most intimate counsels of the King, the old peasant leader explained to me, rather ruefully, why it was that the gulf between him and King Carol was unbridgeable.

These were the exciting and puzzling days of January, 1938 when Carol had summoned to power the Fascist, anti-Semitic government of Octavian Goga, contrary to constitutional authority and despite the recent election results, which had given Goga's National Christian Party a comparatively infinitesimal and wholly unrepresentative vote. Maniu, whose National Peasant Party had secured the largest number of votes had, strangely enough, thrown in his lot with the Fascist and terrorist Iron Guard, the uncompromising opponents of the King.

In his sitting-room in the Athenée Palace Hotel in Bucharest, where he brooded and carried on his political work under the shadow of Carol's disapproval, Maniu told me: "It is quite true that I have profound monarchist feelings and that I am a supporter of our Dynasty. I have a sincere respect for the personality of King Carol the Second. But my relations with the King are not normal.

I regret that deeply. What is the cause of this situation? It is that I cannot approve certain personal attitudes on his part and the manner in which the King is conducting the State policy." I pressed him for a definition of his phrase, "certain personal attitudes", and he replied: "The fact that His Majesty maintains in his circle certain persons who do not deserve the distinction of association with him and who influence him towards the practice of personal government by the King, disregarding public opinion on important national problems and the constitutional rights of the nation."

Maniu had been largely responsible for Carol's return to Roumania, though he had objected, at first, to his assuming the Crown. I inquired of the obviously disappointed statesman if, in the light of events, he would have acted otherwise. Deliberating at some length before replying, Maniu said, carefully: "I do not regret at all having brought the King back to the Throne. What I do regret, most strongly, is that certain groups and personalities are exploiting certain defects of character which are common to every man, but which must be restrained in a king. As a consequence, the King's high personal qualities cannot be used for the benefit of our people because the real forces and personalities of the country are cast aside and eliminated from the conduct of State affairs."

When I insisted, politely, on a clearer indication of what he meant by "certain groups and personalities", Maniu hesitated, but finally agreed that he referred to "Madame Lupescu and those associated with her". He added: "On this point I regret also that Roumanian statesmen do not follow the attitude of British statesmen, in similar circumstances." He referred, obviously, to the severe standards of personal conduct required of Royalty in Britain, where the influence of a Lupescu would not likely be tolerated.

In the autumn of 1928, Ion Bratianu died. With his death, and in face of the now powerfully consolidated opposition and the parous disintegration of national affairs, the feudalistic Boyar governing clique was struck a mortal blow. Without the dogged old tyrant, the faction which had depended on him for its influence and hold on the nation, was leaderless and fell to pieces. The Regency became still less of account. For a few months, Ion Bratianu's brother, Vintila, continued the family political dynasty as Prime Minister, but he had neither the ability nor the strength of Ion to combat the powerful new forces ranged in hostility to him and his faction. He resigned in November.

When Maniu, the natural successor of Bratianu as leader of the country, with the strongest party behind him, quickly took control of the situation and became Prime Minister, the bulk of the nation hailed him as the saviour of Roumania. For a time he ruled with almost undisputed authority, and it seemed as if the country were destined to a new era of order and restored self-respect, as well as to a revival of the national fortunes. Maniu instituted a cleansing

of the governmental machine, and essayed to purge political life of its traditional corruption. He ventured on a programme of reconstruction, introducing reforms in the conditions of the peasantry, his chief love, reorganising the general economic system and improving transport. On the whole, Maniu's government performed a valiant task and did it well. There was a perceptible over-sweep of general contentment and a wave of relief that the days of the Bratianu tyranny had gone.

This placid reaction did not last, however. The first flush of unquestioning acceptance of a new type of government passed, as is the way of men. There were more basic factors to account for the change in the enthusiasm for Maniu's authority. The repressiveness of the old régime had brought sullen and, for all practical purposes, inchoate elements of opposition. As long as Ion Bratianu held the reins of power, these forces were, for the most part, driven more or less underground. The sudden relaxation of his grip emboldened these forces to emerge. The advent of a really liberal régime gave them the possibility to express themselves and taught them the way of criticism without fear of penalty and reprisal. They learned, moreover, that organisation of opposition to governmental authority could be accomplished without restriction. This opened the way for the pursuit of political ambitions, the revival of old factions and the creation of new ones with ideas and policies hostile to those of Maniu.

Conservatives, Liberals, "National Christians", the Iron Guard, and a host of other political denominations rose and prated vociferously. The Iron Guard, particularly, grew arrogant. Its leader, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, began to indulge in "messianic" antics, utilising a natural, if uncultured gift for demagoguery, to inflame passions and inculcate ideas of terrorism as the method of securing "national regeneration" towards the ideal of a "Christian state".

New men arose as national figures of importance and influence, at home and abroad. Chief among them was Nicolai Titulescu, "the fabulous Foreign Minister" who "looks like a mongoloid monkey; he is the best conversationalist in the Balkans; he controls all the best journalists in Bucharest; he is the one man in Roumania trusted by the French General Staff; he is torrentially voluble in half a dozen languages; his wit and unquenchable vivacity are famous all over Europe; he wears an overcoat indoors; he is No. 2 on the death list of the Iron Guard".¹ A man, powerful, able, to be reckoned with and feared.

These were some of the human factors which wrought a change of attitude towards Maniu and his government. There were other factors, of which his opponents took full advantage to upset the smooth path of Roumania's destiny. The "economic blizzard" which swept over Europe, in those days, spread its icy blast through Roumania as well. The peasants and artisans of that country

¹ Gunther: *Inside Europe*.

shivered with their fellows in other lands. The produce of their farms, from Transylvania to the Black Sea, from Bessarabia to the Danube, lay waste; the markets of the west, for Roumania's wheat and maize, dried up. The oil wells of Ploesti stood idle; the derelict ships of the maritime powers had no need of the "liquid gold" and the machines of the factories of Europe were at a standstill. Roumania could sell little and buy nothing. This was the era of "starvation amid plenty" and Roumania shared the world's hunger and grew restive because of it.

The nation, like others, groped for ways out of the morass, grasped despairingly at new nostrums and searched eagerly for new "messiahs". These were hard days for Roumania and the old wounds of disruption opened up again. Corruptive influences once more emerged and internecine conflicts encouraged them. The "die-hards" of old Bratianu shook themselves out of their apparent death sleep, and, under the leadership of Vintila Bratianu, gathered new life out of the national afflictions and collected their latent, though scattered forces to add to the general confusion. They made life difficult for Maniu by encouraging, if not overtly supporting, the reactionaries of the Iron Guard in stirring up the whirlwind of discontent.

In this situation, thoughts for the exiled Carol in France were given more and more expression. He had not been altogether out of the Roumanian picture, though his appearances were not calculated to enhance his European reputation. The Princess Helen had remained in Bucharest since her husband's departure for the royal funeral in London. There had, then, been no thought or possibility of her sharing Carol's mission, for the rupture between them had already reached a critical stage. His refusal to return without Madame Lupescu and his subsequent enforced withdrawal from the royal house had rendered the rupture complete. With the proclamation of her son Michael as King, on the death of Ferdinand, she had become the Princess Mother, insisting on and carrying out the right and the duty of guardian and tutor of the boy monarch in whom she concentrated her entire interests.

Time, and Carol's persistence in his relationship with Lupescu abroad, added bitterness to the Princess Mother's resentment at her husband's default. Within a year of Carol's exile that bitterness had reached the point where she determined that the *de facto* marriage should be dissolved.

When Maniu came to power, the Princess Mother expressed her desire and resolve to institute divorce proceedings against Carol. The "devout monarchist" opposed her decision and dissuaded her, time and again, from taking the final step. He was a sincere friend of Helen and was completely on her side in the breach with Carol. But as a "devout monarchist", as well as a strict Uniat Catholic,¹

¹ A section of the Greek Orthodox Church of Transylvania acknowledging the spiritual authority of the Pope.

he shrank from encouraging divorce proceedings which would, in his view, cast a slur on the monarchy and serve to confirm Carol in his determination to remain loyal to Lupescu. For, Maniu had the intention of recalling Carol, in good time, and he had high hopes that he would be persuaded to abandon his friend. The first tentative and discreet inquiries in this direction revealed, however, that Carol had no intention of adopting such a course. In face of this, Maniu yielded, with deep reluctance and distaste, to Helen's insistence upon divorce. In this decision, she was abetted by those aristocratic elements who were inimical to her husband and saw, in the final dissolution of the marriage, the end of any possibility of his return to Roumania and, more especially, of his resumption of his royal rights.

In the summer of 1928, the same Supreme Court at Bucharest which had pronounced the nullity of the marriage between the Crown Prince Carol and Zizi Lambrino, declared as dissolved the marriage between the ex-Crown Prince Carol and the Princess Helen of Greece. Carol, from abroad, had protested vehemently against the divorce proceedings and refused to be a party to them. Intimate friends of his declared that he had written to his wife pleading with her to stay her hand. He had even, they said, sent confidential and trusted emissaries to her to reinforce his pleadings; but Helen remained adamant and would not yield. How far, if at all, Helen's abandonment of her resolution for the divorce would have altered Carol's course with regard to Lupescu or would have affected the subsequent events in Roumania, it is impossible to estimate. But his unwillingness that the divorce should take place has to be recorded.

The divorce made little impress on Roumania or upon the trend of affairs. The Princess Mother Helen was, at best, a shadowy figure who had never caught the imagination, certainly not the enthusiasm or even the interest of the Roumanian people. She held herself aloof even from the aristocratic strata of society; she was almost unknown among the people. She was rarely seen and did not appear to have any communion with things Roumanian or to desire to acquire it. The divorce proceedings were discreet and did not provide even "a nine days wonder" in Roumania where the preoccupations of the people in the major distresses and problems of their daily existence made the domestic differences between the barely-known Greek Princess and the absent ex-Crown Prince a matter of comparatively minor importance.

Abroad, it was different, of course. The divorce in such exalted royal quarters was a luscious piece of scandal and its piquancies were threshed out and elaborated to the last detail. As the guilty party, Carol came in for an additional spate of criticism which did not minimise his delinquencies. Lupescu shared that criticism more by innuendo and the oblique statement than by direct allusion to

her part in the cause célèbre. In her case, the omissions in the numerous references to her spoke even more significantly than straight-forward allusions. The scribes winked their eyes and put their forefingers to the tips of their noses, as it were, and left the impression that "we could say much more, you know, but in the case of a lady. . . ." Deservedly, of course, sympathy went to the deserted Princess; on that there was universal accord.

As conditions in Roumania grew worse, public opinion advanced steadily and rapidly towards the hope and the possibility of Carol's return. So far did this trend of view proceed, that it developed into a supreme national issue, threatening to divide, in yet another direction, a country already torn into fragments by political dissension. Maniu could not arrest the movement and felt himself swept along with it. When the movement became the subject of widespread intrigue and the cause of party faction, the Prime Minister felt impelled to take cognisance of it and to formulate a policy. He was driven further on this course by the fact that, within his own Peasant Party, the hope for Carol's return grew so widespread as to threaten a deep schism among Maniu's immediate supporters.

Carol himself took a major part, though with great care and discretion, in the growth of the new loyalty towards him in his country. He had now reached the definite conclusion that his days of exile must come to an end and that he had a duty to the nation, as well as to himself, to resume his place and to take his share in the fortunes of a distraught country. He hoped for a "call" from Roumania and there was a great deal of coming and going between Bucharest and Paris with many clandestine conferences between him and his adherents.

The "call" did not come, for there were many obstacles still in the way of it. Chief among them was the Prime Minister Maniu. No "call" could come except from him, so long as he was in power and the leader of the largest party in the state; but he had conditions to put forward and assurances to be demanded before he could invite the ex-Crown Prince to resume his position in Roumania. Madame Lupescu was the supreme issue, for Maniu. Would Carol agree to return without her? Maniu never wavered in his view that the dissension between Carol and Helen could and should be healed, in the interests of the state. Maniu believed that he could influence the Princess to reconsider her attitude. Would Carol consent to a reconciliation? There was the further technical difficulty that Carol's son Michael was the proclaimed and *de facto* King of Roumania. But this did not seem, to Maniu, an insuperable obstacle, assuming the other questions could be satisfactorily solved.

Maniu decided to take the lead in finding the solution to the problem of the exiled prince, as much to circumvent the potentiality of danger in a national situation already fraught with imminent

gravity as to solve it on its own merits. The Prime Minister thereupon sent his own emissaries to Paris on the mission of "sounding" Carol on his intentions and of securing his response to the conditions Maniu laid down.

Carol's answer on all points was unequivocal. On the main question of the return he was decisive; he was anxious and ready to do so and to play his part in restoring the tranquillity of the realm and in redressing its economic and political balance. On the score of Lupescu he was equally clear and emphatic: he would not consent to abandon her. Despite his reputation to the contrary, Carol was actuated in this regard by motives of chivalrous loyalty as well as of personal attraction. Lupescu had stood unswervingly by him and he felt it fundamentally wrong that he should be asked to leave her stranded and friendless in western Europe.

On the score of reconciliation with the Princess Helen, Carol was less committal. He parried by suggesting that, since such a reunion was a matter affecting the Princess's personal predilections, it could only be effected by the working of time and personal readjustments, in the light of events. He insisted, therefore, on the return being the prelude to rather than the consequence of reconciliation with his former wife. On that view, he was unable and refused to give any undertaking as a condition precedent of a "call" to return to Roumania.

Maniu gave his version of these negotiations, four years later:

"The impatience of H.R.H. Prince Carol (to return to Roumania) was growing, but he showed not the least sign of an intention to separate from Madame Lupescu. . . . In all the conversations which I had with H.R.H. the Princess Mother Helene, I tried to remove her explicable bitterness toward H.R.H. Prince Carol, with the aim that should Prince Carol return the ground would be spiritually prepared for a reconciliation. . . . H.R.H. Prince Carol judged my foresight as indecision.

"My attitude, which was confirmed by messages I received, was not caused by hesitation but by the fact that for me two things were important; first, I needed assurance from H.R.H. Prince Carol that . . . he intended to reign in a constitutional manner and not through personal friends; and, secondly, that he would separate from Madame Lupescu whose fatal influence on Prince Carol enshadows him. . . ."

Lupescu herself had something to say on the matter when she was consulted. Maniu quoted her as saying: "The day that H.R.H. is restored to the throne for the happiness of the country, I shall disappear for ever, and my only wish is that thereafter no one shall speak of me." There is no reason to doubt the honesty and sincerity

¹ Gunther: *Inside Europe*.

of that intention. If, in fact, she did return to Roumania when Carol was installed on the throne, it was on Carol's insistence that she did so and not by reason of any Machiavellian deceit on her part.

Behind Lupescu's declaration of her willingness to disappear from Carol's life "for the happiness of the country", lies an unusual story of the inter-play of famous personalities and their part in the unfolding of a drama of politics, romance and a throne.

A few doors from the house of Carol and Lupescu, in the Chaussée d'Antin in Paris, lived Lois Fuller, the American dancer of world-wide fame in the early years of the century. She was on terms of cordial friendship with the ex-Crown Prince and his companion; they visited each other regularly, took meals together and exchanged confidences.

Lois Fuller had a more than passing interest in the affairs of the exiled couple, for she was the closest, though unknown confidante of Carol's mother, Queen Marie, with whom she corresponded for more than twenty years. Although during this long time the two women rarely met, the correspondence between them was continuous, and of the most intimate character. To Lois Fuller, Queen Marie opened her heart and gave her trust more than to any other person. The Queen sought the dancer's advice in all the many crises of her life; she revealed to her, as woman to woman, all the secrets of her private and public affairs, and the inner difficulties and complexities of Roumanian politics. Marie recorded, in her long and voluminous correspondence, the most personal details of her married life with King Ferdinand, and she elaborated in the most unrestrained detail the distaste, which grew to revulsion, which she felt for him. Her letters dissected, in pungent and critical comment, the characters and lives of the members of her family. Her pen lashed out against the courtiers and the politicians and revealed many sordid and unpublishable details of their mis-conducts and malpractices and ineptitudes. If ever it be published, this correspondence between a Queen and a dancer will rank as one of the historic commentaries of the age, as well as one of the most revealing royal "human documents" of all time.

The association between Queen Marie and Lois Fuller began in unusual circumstances. Sudden fame came to Lois Fuller in the 'nineties of last century when she startled Paris, and all Europe, by the original genius, the artistry, and novelty of her dancing. Her success developed into a succession of triumphs when, with the ballet which she had created, she toured the Continent. The tour took her to Bucharest where her appearance was hailed as an event of importance. The occasion was a "gala" graced by the presence of the entire Royal Family, most enthusiastic of whom was the romantic, artistic Crown Princess Marie.

While the tour of the Lois Fuller ballet was a pronounced artistic

success, it was a failure financially. When the performance in Bucharest was ended Lois Fuller found herself without sufficient money to take her company to Budapest, the next point in the tour. Distracted, she appealed to the Crown Princess for help. Without hesitation, Marie gave the dancer the six thousand gold lei she required, telling Lois Fuller that she could regard this as a gift but, if she preferred to consider it as a loan, she could repay it whenever she could. Lois Fuller repaid the loan but the meeting and the letters which followed it led to a deep and sympathetic intimacy.

Long afterwards, an event of critical importance intensified the friendship into one of the closest confidence. In 1917, during the first Great War, Germany had overrun one half of Roumania. The Roumanian Army was in retreat in Moldavia. The situation was so grave that it was suggested that the whole army and the Court should withdraw into Russia, towards Rostov and the Caucasus. Queen Marie (Ferdinand had become King in 1914) opposed the withdrawal and advocated strenuously a "last stand" against the invaders. With the aid of military advisers, she evolved a plan whereby the army should be concentrated within a certain triangular area of Roumania and there to fight out the struggle with the Germans. The scheme had one paramount defect—Roumania was despoiled of military equipment; medical and food supplies were lamentably short; there was a woeful lack of money with which to purchase them.

In her distress, Queen Marie remembered her friend Lois Fuller who was in Paris doing valiant work in aid of the Red Cross and in relieving the sufferings of American and Allied soldiers. The Queen enlisted the services of an American military representative in Roumania to take a letter to the dancer explaining the desperate plight of Roumania and appealing to her to secure, from America, the vital aid without which the country was doomed. In the letter Marie wrote: "We stand with clenched fists and our backs to the wall." The bearer of the letter undertook the mission, travelled through Russia and, by way of Archangel, at length reached Paris.

The letter was handed in at the American Embassy in Paris, for delivery to Lois Fuller. An American girl employed at the Embassy took it to the dancer in the *Chaussée d'Antin*. In the presence of the girl, Lois Fuller opened the letter and, as she read it, burst into tears. In her distress she exclaimed: "Something will have to be done for Roumania." The girl, upset by the dancer's emotion, asked: "Is there anything I can do to help?" Lois Fuller, taking the question as a simple and natural response to her distress, said: "Unfortunately, there is nothing *you* can do in a matter of this kind." To this the girl replied: "I can't, of course, but perhaps my guardian can." She explained that she was the orphan daughter of the former owner of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, one of the most important newspapers in the Middle West of America, and that her

guardian was Newton D. Baker, Secretary of State for War in the United States Government.

In a matter of days, the dancer and the girl were crossing the Atlantic. In Washington, Lois Fuller interviewed Newton Baker who was deeply impressed with Queen Marie's appeal. He called into consultation the Secretary of the Treasury, Carter Glass, and within a short time an American loan was offered to Roumania. Through diplomatic channels, a letter was sent to King Ferdinand and Queen Marie and to the Roumanian government at Jassy assuring them that the United States would stand by Roumania.

That loan and the assurance of support were the turning point in Roumania's fortunes. On the strength of them, the proposed withdrawal into Russia was abandoned and Queen Marie's plan to "stand and fight" prevailed. In America and when she returned to Paris, Lois Fuller canvassed all her rich friends and from them collected large sums for the Roumanian Red Cross and for the Queen's own war activities, her hospitals and relief services. Queen Marie never forgot Lois Fuller's service at the grave hour of Roumania's distress and peril.

When the troubles arose between the Crown Prince Carol and the Royal Family and the politicians of Roumania, Queen Marie poured out all her sorrows to the American dancer, now an old, frail woman but still of brilliant mind. Lois Fuller knew every detail of Carol's life and of his association with Madame Lupescu. Since the days when Marie had confided to her how the prince had been born "an unwanted child", she held an affection for him. When she made the acquaintance of Lupescu, in the Chaussée d'Antin, she found her fascinating and liked her. She was entirely sympathetic to Carol's desire to return to Roumania.

Lois Fuller conceived it to be her duty to impress upon Queen Marie the necessity of removing her opposition to her son's reinstatement and to take a more lenient, if not a sympathetic view of his association with Lupescu. She wrote to Marie that she was doing wrong to her son by resisting his wish to resume his place in Roumania and that it was her duty, as a mother, to make it possible for him to return home. In one letter she wrote: "One day you may be a widow and your son is the first who should be the protector of an ageing mother, even if she is a Queen." Lois Fuller was referring to the possibility of Ferdinand's imminent death; he was then dangerously ill with cancer. The plea did not prevail, however. Marie was bitter in her refusal and, in her reply to Lois Fuller, wrote acidly of "that woman with the red hair who has bewitched my son away from us".

The aged dancer came to the conclusion, reluctantly, that the separation of Lupescu from Carol, the only way in which his return to Roumania could be accepted, was necessary. She evolved a plan by which this could be secured decorously and without

difficulty or reproach to any of the interested parties. In her scheme she secured the collaboration of a wealthy Californian woman, the widow of an American "sugar king", living in Paris. The plan was that Lupescu should take up residence in British Columbia, the rich American widow volunteering to pay all expenses and to provide Lupescu with a life pension in the event of Carol and the Roumanian Government being unable to do so. The essence of this in some respects childish plan was that by selecting British Columbia, at the greatest possible distance from Europe, Queen Marie would be assured that Lupescu could not return to Roumania and re-join Carol overnight.

When the details of the scheme were worked out, to the satisfaction of Lois Fuller and her collaborator, the suggestion was put to Lupescu. Her reply was: "My love for Carol should not interfere with his duties towards his own people who place so many hopes in him. If it is necessary that I should part from him, I am ready to go anywhere away from him, even to British Columbia."

Delighted, Lois Fuller wrote to Marie about the scheme and of Lupescu's willingness to agree to it. The Queen expressed her happiness at the project but refused to believe that Lupescu had accepted it in the terms reported to her. Lois Fuller, thereupon, secured from Lupescu a written and signed statement containing her precise words. The original statement was sent to Queen Marie in Bucharest; a photographic copy was kept in Lois Fuller's house, in the steel box in which she kept all Marie's letters to her. Nothing came of the British Columbia plan because Carol resolutely opposed it.

When Lois Fuller lay dangerously ill in Paris, a Roumanian, a member of a prominent aristocratic family closely associated with Queen Marie, was admitted into her house in the Chaussée d'Antin, insisting on the urgency of his need to see the invalid. He claimed to have been sent on a special mission from the Royal Family to secure and take back to Bucharest Queen Marie's correspondence with the American dancer. Lois Fuller, wise and still alert enough to doubt the honesty of the emissary's purpose, resisted the request by asking for proofs of his authority from the Queen herself. Unable to produce such evidence, the intruder, despite the protests of the sick old woman, forcibly removed the steel box containing the precious—and damaging—correspondence which lay in a corner of the bedroom, and made his way out of the house. Four days later, Lois Fuller died.

While the movement for Carol's return increased in volume and expression, negotiations proceeded sporadically but with intensity. Then suddenly, in May 1928, the world was startled by the revelation that the ex-Crown Prince, with Madame Lupescu, was in England, at the Surrey village of Godstone and that a fine conspiracy was afoot whereby he intended a secret and dramatic

flight to Roumania from the quiet English countryside, to launch a surprise *coup d'état* and seize the throne on which his son sat. There can be no doubt that the plan was prepared and ready for execution. It was revealed accidentally to a London journalist who promptly, and understandably, and with characteristic enterprise, narrated the main outlines of the plan in a leading Sunday newspaper. It was all there—the secretly chartered aeroplanes, the flight on a given day to Switzerland and thence to Roumania, the printing and collection of leaflets to be scattered by air over Roumania, announcing the arrival of the rightful King and calling on the people to rally to him.

The revelation became the “story” that filled the front pages of the world’s newspapers for weeks on end. In London, the press tumbled over itself to unearth every detail of the plot and revelled in it from every possible “angle”, relevant and irrelevant, important and unimportant. The whole old story of the “royal rapscaillon” was told and retold with undisguised relish. Lupescu shared the limelight; the “Titian hair”, the “glamour” of her personality, her “influence” over the plotting prince, and all, received the fullest attention at the hands of the delighted scribes.

The newspapers that had been “scooped” in the first instance demonstrated their chagrin by initiating a campaign against Prince Carol. The use of British soil for the planning and execution of a conspiracy against “a friendly state” was held to be an “abuse of British hospitality” on the part of a royal exile. Impeccable leader writers indited their indignation at such an irreverent besmirching of the immaculate name of Britain and at such a pollution of her sacred soil. There were demands for penalties against the malefactors, no matter how exalted their origin and station. The matter inevitably reached the House of Commons where, in response to questions, the Home Secretary, Sir William Joynson-Hicks (later Lord Brentford), expressed, in suitably politic phrases but in pointedly acid context, the Government’s sense of affront and disapproval of the undesirable activities of the Roumanian royal exile. Within a few days, the Home Secretary was able to inform an anxious Parliament that the whole unfortunate episode had been satisfactorily concluded by the departure from England of the ex-Crown Prince Carol and his entourage. In fact, Carol had been informed that his continued presence on British soil was regarded as undesirable and he was invited to leave as soon as possible. With his companions, he was quietly escorted to Dover by Scotland Yard detectives, who saw him safely aboard a cross-Channel steamer which bore him towards Belgium.

Carol remained in retreat for some days at the Chateau d’Ardenne, near Brussels, to cogitate angrily on the failure of his plans and to reconsider his next steps to fulfil his now patent determination to regain his lost throne. There was no doubt, in

Roumania, that his return was now only a question of time. The country awaited him expectantly, though unaware when and in what manner he would make his appearance on Roumanian soil. Maniu not only anticipated the return but actively prepared for it. It was clear that nothing could stop it and that, if there were any attempt to interfere with the Prince's determination, the country would be thrown into civil conflict.

The Royal exile, sadly disappointed by the failure of the Godstone scheme, decided, however, to move more cautiously. With Lupescu, he returned to Paris and his chateau at Coesmes to lay a surer foundation and to await a more propitious time for the return home. Naturally, the premature exposure of the Godstone plan had seriously upset the organisation in Roumania which had been created in advance of Carol's return. That had to be re-created. The public mind had to be re-attuned towards the prince who had failed. The process was slower but the groundwork was firmer. In due course, more elaborate plans were laid and the time arrived when Carol announced his decision to go back.

Maniu, now in direct communication with Carol, kept the Regency informed of the plans for his reception. To secure that the ex-Crown Prince's progress on his return should proceed with a due semblance of normality, it was arranged that one member of the Regency, Sarateanu (who had replaced Buzdugan on his death), should resign and that Carol should replace him. Maniu thought, apparently, that Carol would not wish to precipitate matters by an undue haste in occupying the throne and that he would observe, at least, the constitutional forms whereby the boy King Michael would be decently removed from his position. It would appear, indeed, that Maniu believed that Carol would be content with the rôle of leading member of the Regency. Troops were assembled at Cluj and Jassy and the Bucharest garrison was kept in readiness at the airfield where Carol was expected to land.

As unexpectedly as the revelation of the plot at Godstone came the news on the morning of June 6, 1930, that Carol had landed at Bucharest. Madame Lupescu was not with him. During the day, he sent word to Maniu that he desired to be proclaimed King immediately and requested him to summon a Cabinet Council to adopt a formal resolution calling him to the throne. Maniu was taken aback by this sudden and unexpected development. Carol had given none of the undertakings—with regard to reconciliation with Helen and the abandonment of Lupescu—and the Prime Minister made a final effort to restrain the impatient prince.

He summoned a meeting of the leaders of the National Peasant Party. There was a division of opinion on the question of Carol's accession. Some held that he should retire to Rustcuk, in Bulgaria, to await a formal expression of the national will. The leader of this section was Virgil Madgearu, the party secretary and Maniu's

Minister of Agriculture, who was murdered by the Iron Guard after King Carol's "abdication". Others proposed that Prince Nicholas and the other members of the Regency should resign and that Carol should become sole Regent. Maniu himself, while avoiding a precise attitude, told his colleagues, "I have taken my oath to King Michael". The meeting took no decision, but decided to summon a National Assembly of the party.

There were other forces at work, however, to prevent Carol coming to the throne. The Chief of Police, General Nicoleanu, received an order from a member of Maniu's Government, whose name has never been revealed, to arrest Carol, and parties of police searched Bucharest for him all that day and night. Carol was at the Cotroceni Palace with his brother, Prince Nicholas.

The next day, on Carol's insistent demand, Maniu called the Council of Ministers, hoping to induce the Cabinet to withhold their agreement to the proclamation of the new King until, at least, he gave some assurance that the conditions would be fulfilled. What occurred at the Cabinet meeting has been related by Maniu:

"Five Ministers voted for the entry of H.R.H. Prince Carol into the Regency, while six were in favour of his being proclaimed King. My view was the minority, but several ministers said they were prepared to submit to my decision, whatever it might be. . . . During the Cabinet meeting a large delegation of members of Parliament of our party had come to see me. I received them. They were of the opinion that H.R.H. Prince Carol should be proclaimed King immediately and begged me not to obstruct their desires. I saw at once the problem had taken a turning from which no efforts of mine could divert it, even though it was obvious what evil results would follow if H.R.H. Prince Carol were proclaimed King without first having arranged the question of Princess Helen and Madame Lupescu. . . . But I could not force my views in face of public opinion . . . and it was too late to obtain the results at which I aimed. I therefore took recourse to the only logical and honourable solution; I . . . resigned."¹

Maniu here makes manifest not only that Carol's return had the backing of public opinion but that the mass of the people ardently desired his accession as King. From the moment when the news of his return leaked out there were demonstrations of quite exuberant delight in the streets of Bucharest and throughout the country. In that, Carol, as always, until the fateful days of 1940, had a shrewd sense of how far he could go in his personal policies. Wherever he was sure of popular sentiment, he proceeded to enforce his intentions to the logical limit. He did so on this occasion, and within two days of his arrival at Bucharest he was proclaimed King as Carol the

¹ Gunther: *Inside Europe*.

Second. The boy King Michael was not dethroned, but his reign was ignored, as it were. The Act of January 4, 1926, depriving Carol of his right of succession was declared invalid and Carol the Second was assumed, technically, to have succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, King Ferdinand.

On the same ground of calculated respect for public opinion, he felt that a breach with Juliu Maniu, leader of the party which was, numerically and politically, the most powerful in the state, would be impolitic and possibly unpopular as the first act of his new monarchy. He desired to proceed warily, until he had established his authority securely. He, therefore, appealed to Maniu to reconsider his resignation and renew his Premiership. Maniu yielded. He was the more able to do so because, to him, there was at least one satisfactory feature of Carol's return—he came without Lupescu; and the peasant leader believed that this augured well for the eventual achievement of his own purposes with regard to her and the Princess Helen. He proceeded to act upon his belief and was successful in arranging a meeting between the King and the Princess Helen. That meeting, he hoped, would be the prelude to reconciliation, re-marriage and, in natural sequence, the coronation of the King and Queen of Roumania. The King readily, even enthusiastically, agreed to the meeting. Helen had to be persuaded by Maniu's eloquent sincerity.

Carol, indeed, had already made approaches to the Princess from Paris, just before the plans for his return were finally put into execution. Through Prince Georges Valentin Bibesco, he sent to Helen personal letters in which he wrote: "For the sake of Roumania and our child we should resume marital life." He begged for a reply, but his letters remained unanswered.

The meeting with the Princess took place the day after Carol's return. He chivalrously called on her at their former home on the Soseaua Kisselev. When he entered the main hall, Helen appeared at the head of the grand staircase, with the boy King Michael by her side; she was also accompanied by her Aide-de-Camp, Colonel Scheletti, indicating, to Carol's surprise and disappointment that the meeting was intended to be no more than formal. The Princess was in her most regal manner; she remained standing, cold and austere, at the top of the stairs, giving no sign to Carol to approach. Embarrassed at first, Carol spoke a few words of greeting to which Helen replied curtly and formally. When he moved up the stairs, the Princess walked down to meet him, with Michael, whom Carol embraced affectionately.

Carol asked Helen if he might have a few words with her in private. She refused. Three times Carol repeated his request, each time more pleadingly. On her final refusal he said: "May I, at least, kiss your hand?" The Princess turned abruptly, walked up the stairs and disappeared. The meeting lasted only a few minutes.

Carol saw at once that there was no hope even of a friendship which might be the preliminary to a deeper relationship. It was quite clear to him that Helen had made up her mind not to forgive his affront to her pride and the disruption of her home. He was hurt by the cold and almost contemptuous rejection of his advances towards the Princess. After all, there was the significant fact that he had returned to Roumania without Lupescu; that indicated, at least, that Carol had scrupulously avoided the possibility of complications attending the reunion with his people; the gesture was also capable of being interpreted as an effort, on his part, to pave the way for a reconstruction of his domestic life, in the interests of the state. Had the Princess Helen evinced any willingness to reciprocate the King's patent intention for friendship, the course of Carol's life and of Roumanian history might have been changed. Though he was deeply hurt by Helen's cold rejection of his offer of friendship, Carol bore the Princess no resentment because of it. He showed this and his sense of chivalry by one of his first decrees as King, conferring on her the rank and dignity of Queen, entitling her to be addressed as "Her Majesty, the Princess Helen".

Carol returned to the Royal Palace discomfited. Despite the delighted acclamations of the populace to which, with the warmth of feeling that was part of his character, he reacted happily, he felt isolated and alone. As sovereign of Roumania he had redressed a major error in his life and had achieved his ambition; as a man, he had failed. Now, amid the plaudits of the crowds beneath his palace window and the fawning obeisances of courtiers and politicians (many of them, only yesterday his bitterest foes), he had no personal roots.

He was estranged from his mother, Queen Marie. Relations with his brother, Prince Nicholas, were unsatisfactory and distant. With the other members of his family, things were no better. For this state of affairs he was much to blame. It was not that his brother and sisters were unduly disturbed by Carol's private conduct; in the Roumanian Royal House there was a great deal of latitude, even laxity, in personal conduct. But most of that family were gifted with obstinate character and high spirited temperament and they did not take kindly to Carol's rather aggressive superiority, as Head of the Family. The breach with Helen was now obviously complete. The child whom he adored was removed from him and kept rigidly under the eye of the unhappy mother. In the privacy of his palace, Carol felt dispirited. It was only natural that his thoughts should turn again towards the woman who had given him companionship, friendship and counsel in the difficult years of exile.

The rugged old Maniu still did not lose hope that he could arrange all Carol's problems to the satisfaction of the state. He proposed that Carol should be crowned, the implication being that the



CERIL & de GRIFFITH: "ATTABOY, CAROL! NOW YOU CLASP THE
HEROINE TO YOUR BOSOM! — AND FINISH
CAROL OF RUMANIA: "W-W-WHICH HEROINE?"



TOO MUCH "LOVE INTEREST."

By kind permission of Low, of the "Evening Standard"

LOW

coronation ceremony might include the Princess Helen. Carol temporised by giving the appearance of consent, and the delighted Maniu proceeded to put plans for the coronation into execution. He even fixed the approximate date, between September 15 and 20. The place was to be Alba Julia. Everything appeared to be moving smoothly, when suddenly the whole edifice of Maniu's plans and hopes and policies fell to pieces. Maniu has given his version of the drama (for him, the tragedy) that unexpectedly unfolded itself.

"Immediately after the formation of the government in accord, with the wishes of H.M. the King, I proposed that the coronation be held without delay. I fixed the date between September 15 and 20, 1930, and established that H.M. the King should be crowned together with Princess Mother Helen. I presented the programme for the coronation and took the preliminary measures at Alba Julia. Tired, but glad at the result obtained, I left for a two weeks' holiday.

"Upon my return, I found the situation entirely changed. H.M. the King no longer wanted to hear of the coronation. The situation which, to my great joy, had been improving, tending to become normal, had been exaggerated. I did not know how this change had come about. . . .

"Then, incidentally, I learned that Madame Lupescu had returned to the country. I refused to believe it. I made enquiry of the directors of the Security Service, Messrs. Cadere and Bianu. They denied it. I asked M. Vaida; he knew nothing. I was again informed that Madame Lupescu had returned. I again asked M. Bianu, who replied that it was another Madame Lupescu. I learned, however, that she had returned on August 4, 1930, and that she was stopping at the Foisor Palace."

Madame Lupescu had, in fact, returned to Roumania. Carol, overworked, nervous with the strain of the first difficult period of kingship and the work of reconstruction and deprived of companionship, could no longer endure the physical and spiritual isolation in which he found himself. He urged Lupescu to return to him. For a time, she resisted, pointing out to Carol that her reappearance in Roumania would inevitably raise difficulties of a far-reaching character and might destroy the work that he had begun. She emphasised that her return, at so early a stage, at least, would provide his many enemies with the opportunity to renew their hostility and a sharp, easy weapon with which to undermine the authority he had wrought so assiduously to acquire. She referred to the importance of his maintaining his personal prestige which might suffer, particularly having regard to the delicate circumstances surrounding his domestic life. All this Carol understood; but his mood of isolation was paramount in him and it gave him

the strength to convince himself that he could afford to take the risk of her presence near him. At length, Lupescu yielded to his entreaties and, eluding the spies (Maniu's "Security Service"), she succeeded in travelling from Paris to Bucharest unobserved.

From that day, August 4, 1930, Madame Lupescu remained by the side of Carol the Second. Some days later, Maniu resigned. During the whole period of Carol's ten years' reign, the old leader of the National Peasant Party did not return to power.

CHAPTER IV

WHO IS MAGDA LUPESCU?

AN HOUR OR SO before I was due to present myself at the Royal Palace in Bucharest for an audience with His Majesty King Carol the Second, in the first days of January, 1938, I called on the British Minister, Sir Reginald Hoare, an experienced, dignified and amiable British diplomat. Roumania was in the throes of probably its gravest political crisis, certainly the gravest of Carol's reign, so far.

I had come to Roumania to inquire into the meaning of Carol's surprising move in having summoned to power the openly pro-Nazi anti-semitic government of Octavian Goga. I had requested, and had been promptly granted, an interview with the King, for the purpose (which I clearly stated in my request) of publishing, in the London newspaper which I then represented, the King's explanations of and views upon this strange political development in his country. I had prepared a list of the questions I proposed to put to Carol and had deemed it courteous and correct to advise the British Minister of their tenor.

Sir Reginald Hoare, with characteristic tact and wisdom, did not express dissent from my questionnaire, except to suggest that some of my queries were "bold", and somewhat basic to be answered publicly by a reigning sovereign. I asked Sir Reginald his view of the desirability of asking a question which was not on my list. Should I ask the King anything about Madame Lupescu? The British Minister was aghast. If there were one thing the King could not tolerate and which was likely to arouse his ire, it was to make any reference to her in his presence; a direct question was a venture charged with dynamite. Sir Reginald cautioned me strongly to avoid the subject entirely; a question would probably have the result, he declared with emphasis, that the King would decline to permit publication of any interview at all.

My subsequent talk with King Carol, lasting one hour and a quarter, was cordial, in the extreme. Far from resenting my "bold"

questions or deeming them indiscreet, he replied to them with complete candour, unhesitatingly, and with marked ability. He was so disarmingly friendly and frank in his manner and conversation, that, when he enquired if there were "anything more you would like to know", I considered, hurriedly, whether I should disregard the sagacious advice of the British Minister. With considerable trepidation, I said: "Your Majesty has been graciously frank. I appreciate deeply the patience and courtesy with which you have dealt with the matters I have raised. But there is one more question of great public importance, though it is, for Your Majesty, one of personal and private concern. I would venture, with great respect, and in no sense out of mere curiosity or sensationalism, to ask Your Majesty's views concerning it."

Carol's eyes narrowed and his face hardened. Obviously he sensed the purport of my remarks and looking at me, somewhat forbiddingly as I thought, asked coldly: "Yes? What is your question?" I was frankly perturbed and at once regretted my temerity. I saw my interview vanish before the royal wrath. But I had gone too far and could not draw back. I continued, careful to choose my words: "It is said outside, in Roumania as well as abroad, that a certain lady in Your Majesty's immediate and intimate entourage plays an unduly important part in the political affairs of Roumania and exercises an undue influence on Your Majesty personally and in your conduct of the state. Does Your Majesty feel disposed to express any views upon these suggestions?"

I was alarmed to observe Carol's expression cloud, as he watched me evolve my somewhat hesitating sentences. I was still more alarmed when, after an uncomfortable pause on the conclusion of my question, the King clenched his fist, raised it and brought it down on the table with a resounding thump. When he spoke his voice was thick with anger, his hitherto barely perceptible German intonation was now quite marked. Leaning towards me out of his high-backed, heavily ornate chair, he said: "It is a lie. A complete falsehood. Madame Lupescu does not and never has taken any part in political affairs. She has not exercised any influence on them. As for influencing me . . ." He paused, and then, in a loud tone and with a gesture full of contempt and derision, added the one expletive: "Bah! . . ." Some of his expressions, including the last, were, actually, more emphatic and more in the idiom of English colloquialism.

King Carol well knew that his emphatic denial was not in accordance with the facts, for he quickly followed it by forbidding me to quote him in the context of the interview I intended and had obtained his permission to publish, after he had approved of the text. He had protested too much. There can be no question

that Madame Lupescu had an important rôle in Roumanian political-and-economic-affairs and that, directly or indirectly, she exercised an influence on them. If queenship connoted a positive part in the conduct of the state, she was the "uncrowned queen" of Roumania, from the earliest days of King Carol's accession until his abdication, ten years later.

It may be that Carol's indignation at the suggestion that she exercised an "undue influence" on him personally was not entirely simulated. If so, his outburst of resentment was due to the implication he drew from the criticism—that it contained an aspersion on his own strength of character and his own capacity to govern with the independence and sense of authority that were so much a part of his nature. Carol was always firm on the score of his ability to rule—and to rule without much interference. On the whole, he was impatient of advice, unless he were so completely satisfied with its quality as to convince him of his own judgment. Apart from many other sources of disagreement, this made him none too popular with the politicians and explains, to a large extent, the constant friction between the King and his Ministers and the deeper clashes with such men as Maniu and Titulescu.

In the case of Magda Lupescu the truth lies, as usual, between the extremes of "undue influence", alleged by Carol's and her enemies, and the King's own suggestions to me that "she never has taken any part in political affairs". Her rôle in Roumania has undoubtedly been potent. It could not be otherwise in the case of a woman who combined the maximum of personal attractiveness and charm of character with an unusually high degree of shrewdness in business affairs, a well balanced judgment and a keen understanding of politics. She came to be the manager of Carol's business affairs and was supreme efficient in the job. There was no one to whose counsel he listened with greater attention or whose judgment he respected more.

It was not at all only her physical attractions, superlative though they were, that appealed to him. The possibilities open to him of association with attractive women were, naturally, many, and it was not difficult for him to take advantage of his opportunities. It was her high intelligence which played an infinitely greater part in her long and continuous association with Carol than her quite remarkable beauty. Her influence on Carol was all the greater because she never sought to dominate him. She proffered advice, not as an exacting mistress, but as efficient counsellor and collaborator. She did not impose her personality on him and maintained a proper reticence in respect of his position and authority. In matters of politics, and business, she was always careful to preserve his dignity and authority as King. She had no aspirations to become a queen, and was content to function with discretion.

She never flaunted her position of influence in Carol's innermost and restricted court circle. On the contrary, she shunned publicity and even avoided an appearance in public places. Indeed, she was less known to the Roumanians of Bucharest or elsewhere than any other person, man or woman, prominent in the life and affairs of the state. It has been said that less than a hundred people in Bucharest ever saw her or could have picked her out. Her reputation was in inverse ratio to real knowledge of her.

These facts, her reputation for exceptional intelligence, her practical understanding and the unpretentious manner in which she exercised them in relation to King Carol, were important factors in arousing against her the virulent hostility and enmity of the upper strata of Roumanian society and of the politicians. Her qualities of mind created more animosities than the King's personal interest in her. It was no innovation in Roumanian life for a woman to play politics or to intermeddle in them. Bucharest was notorious for the conspicuous part played by women as the agents of political intrigue, conspiracy and clandestine manœuvres in public affairs. But the tradition was well established that they should confine their activities to the exercise of their personal attractions rather than of their mental qualities—and there was no dearth of feminine charm to be employed in this way.

Moreover, in Roumania, as elsewhere, women who participated in the excitement of "back stage" politics were rarely content to conceal themselves in self-effacement. They rather gloried in their importance and sought the delectable prominence their influence gave them. Deliberately they frequented the salons and public places where eyes could follow and fingers could point discreetly but significantly at them. They delighted in the envy or the malice they aroused. Lupescu was far removed from their class, their methods or their character. Her activities were well concealed. She elected to remain in the background. Her influence was not only in the boudoir but also in the council chamber. She was a woman of affairs as well as of "*affaires*". Her intellectual qualities, and the exercise of them, broke all the traditions of Roumanian conceptions of the "woman in the case".

In addition, there was her alleged Jewish origin. This "taint" was the supreme element in the bitter hatred she evoked in Roumania; it provided the most potent weapon for attack against her and the King. In the country with the most notorious record before Hitler for Jew hatred, the land of Professor Cuza, whose proud boast it was to be the "father of modern anti-semitism" and to have preceded Hitler in teaching the tenets of Jew baiting as a dogma, Jewish origin was, in itself, an indelible stain and inescapable evidence of criminal instincts and tendencies. When a person of Jewish blood, no matter how thin might be the strain, succeeded in attaining so exalted an eminence as to engage the

affection and the confidence of the sovereign, that could only be proof of a major and unpardonable crime. Whatever ills the nation suffered were, therefore, logically to be laid at the door of the Jewish malefactor.

Furthermore, the position acquired by the woman of Jewish blood was held to be the consequence of Jewish machinations of which she was the instrument. The King who suffered himself to be the willing victim of such machinations was to be regarded as aiding and abetting the crimes of the Jews and, hence, to be guilty of conduct inimical to the welfare of the state. So ran the line of argument among Lupescu's and Carol's antagonists. To them, it was quite irrelevant that the Jews of Roumania were deeply hostile to Lupescu, for, naturally, they ascribed all their misfortunes and sufferings at the hands of the anti-semites to the resentment aroused by her supposed Jewish origin.

The Iron Guard were the prime exponents of the "Jewess Lupescu" theme. For them, anti-semitism was the paramount creed in the pursuit of political power and the main and easiest route to its achievement. Codreanu and his fellow agitators seized the fact of Lupescu's alleged Jewish birth to foment hostility against her, the régime and the Jews. Few agitations in history have equalled in virulence, in hate, and in unscrupulousness, the campaign of abuse and calumny waged against her. She became the major issue in Roumanian politics; her name was made the national byword for everything that was evil in the state; she was decried as the wicked genius leading the "holy Christian" nation to ruin. The Iron Guard not only plotted against her; her assassination was proclaimed in its inner councils as a sacred duty and there were many plans and attempts to execute it.

No woman in history, in the position of Lupescu, was so much the target for hate as she. Her foes were found in every class and circle of significance in Roumania. The politicians reviled and feared her; the aristocracy were envious and contemptuous of her; the democratic elements rebelled against her as an instrument of the autocratic rule of the King; the reactionary, terrorist Iron Guard were sworn to remove her. That Lupescu, during the whole ten years of Carol's reign, held her ground in face of a nation of enemies and plotters against her, is as high a tribute to her intelligence, her tenacity and her constancy to Carol as to the depth of his devotion to her.

More has been written and spoken of Magda Lupescu with less enquiry, substantiation and knowledge. For nearly twenty years she has been, probably, the most discussed, the most criticised woman of her time, not only in her own country, but internationally. She has been likened to and placed in the succession of Du Barry and La Pompadour. She has been compared with Madame de Montespan and Louise de la Vallière, even with Nell Gwynne and

Lola Montez. The comparison, in all cases, is faulty. The story of her origin and rise to fame has been written *ad nauseam*; it has been always the same story, sketchy in detail but bulky in volume and description. Scribes have word-painted her portrait lavishly and with liberal use of the colourful phrase; the descriptions of her have been widely circulated.

Notwithstanding all this, little is known of the woman Lupescu. Despite her frequent visits to a number of capitals of Europe, she has been seen rarely in public. Such views as people have had of her have been brief and fleeting. In Bucharest, itself, she was almost a legend. Her house in the Alea Vulpache, in the Parcu Filipescu, the exclusive residential district near the centre of the city, was well known to every citizen of Bucharest. Standing in a small garden abutting on the public thoroughfare, there were no guards, not even a policeman to suggest the residence of a privileged person. No one was ever known to have seen Lupescu or to have recognised her entering or leaving this comparatively small and unpretentious villa. No one ever saw her in the fashionable streets, in the smart restaurants, or in the exclusive shops of Bucharest. She attended few private parties or social functions. She concentrated her interests in her own home or in the small cottage near the Royal Palace with which, report said, it was connected by a secret passage. Between the cottage at the back of the Calea Victoriei and the villa in the Alea Vulpache she usually travelled in a moderately-sized motor car with windows always well screened.

Lupescu has been scrupulous and successful in refraining from publicity of her own making or seeking. She has declined, persistently and resolutely, to be interviewed, though the journalists of Europe and America have pursued her for years and appealed to her times without number for statements for publication or even for a meeting to enable them to "write up" a first-hand description. When I had the rare opportunity of talking to her in Bucharest—a conversation arranged after the utmost difficulty, and persuasion, and through the good offices of King Carol himself—she explained her reluctance to be interviewed because she held herself to be "not of much importance" and because anything she might say "would be misunderstood and perhaps distorted". The press photographers of two continents have entreated her to permit them to focus their cameras on her. She has declined every appeal. It is said that Randolph Hearst, the most powerful newspaper magnate in the United States, once offered her one thousand pounds for a single "exclusive" picture. She was not tempted.

It is not surprising, therefore, that, while so much has been written of her, so little is known about Lupescu. What is surprising is that so little effort has been taken by her ardent biographers and the writers of the piquant pen portrait to investigate the narratives

of her origin and career that have gained such world-wide currency. That her enemies refrained from a closer scrutiny can be understood; the data they had "discovered" were well suited to the campaign of slander and abuse with which they assailed her and invaluable in furthering their political aims and personal prejudices.

The story of Lupescu, repeated ten thousand times and re-hashed in innumerable versions, has, generally, been this: Magda Lupescu was born in the town of Jassy. She was the daughter of a Jew, named Wolff, the owner of a small apothecary shop. At some time in his early life, Wolff changed his name to the Roumanian equivalent, Lupescu. While on a visit to Vienna, Wolff met a girl of the Roman Catholic faith whom he subsequently married. Magda was their only child. She was baptised as Roman Catholic, was brought up in that faith, and educated in a convent. At the age of nineteen she married an army officer named Captain Tampeanu. Madame Tampeanu was vivacious and high-spirited and was gifted with a rare beauty and an altogether fascinating personality which made her unusually popular in the gay set in which she and her husband moved. She was a sparkling and witty conversationalist. She had a penchant for the card-table, danced well and was fond of music of the lighter kind. Her love of gambling led her to the Casino attached to the royal mountain palace of Sinaia. There, in 1923, the young Crown Prince Carol, while on a junketing with his boon companions, saw the fascinating Madame Tampeanu. He sought her company, and gambled with her at the tables. He delighted in her wit, her gaiety and her charm of manner. He fell in love with the officer's wife. Later, Captain Tampeanu and Magda Lupescu were divorced.

That is the story. There are some strange flaws and omissions in it which necessitate further enquiry, cast doubts on the "facts", and suggest that Lupescu's origin is other than the one generally accepted. The first fact is that few writers have taken the trouble to ascertain her true Christian name. The woman friend of King Carol has never been "Magda" Lupescu. Her proper—and only—Christian name is "Helena". By this name she has been always known to and addressed by her friends. "Magda" was given to her by the Italian journalists of Milan, in 1926, when she met Carol there after his visit to London for Queen Alexandra's funeral. These writers thought that "Helena" or "Elena" was a short, familiar form of the Italian "Magdalena". The true name, Helena, is of some importance.

There is no question about the existence of Wolff, the Jewish apothecary of Jassy. He came to live in Bucharest, though how he earned his living there has never been known. To all appearances he was a man of leisure, and report had it that he was maintained in comfort, though not in affluence, by his daughter over at the

Royal Palace in the Calea Victoriei. So real was he that, in Bucharest, I heard the often-told story "to the effect that her (Lupescu's) father scolded her severely at the time that Carol's brother, Nicholas, was indulging in amorous and scandalous high jinks. Carol had settled, as it were, down. But Nicholas was acting up. Against his brother's orders he had committed marriage with a certain Madame Saveanu. Carol had done something exactly similar in his youth, but there is no puritan like a reformed rake, and he was wild with fury; Nicholas, he said, was bringing a bad name to the crown. Bucharest rocked, especially at the report that Nicholas blacked his royal brother's eye. And old Lupescu came to Magda saying: "Daughter, daughter, what kind of a family are you getting mixed up with!"¹ At some unknown time, Wolff changed his name to Lupescu.

Nothing is known of Lupescu père's parentage and associations in his youth. It may be accepted that he was a Jew, and so he was certainly a member of the Jewish community of Jassy. That community, like all others in Roumania, was compact, gregarious and generally strictly orthodox in religion. Marriage between a Jewish youth and a non-Jewish girl, in those days, would have been regarded by his co-religionists as a heinous offence. Moreover, such a union would have been frowned upon by the Roumanian families and authorities; in Jassy, there was little love for the Jews, who formed a high percentage of the population. In short, the marriage of the Jew Wolff to a Christian girl must have been exceptional, at least—certainly difficult.

In the days of Wolff's youth the country was passing through one of its most dismal periods of Jew-baiting anti-semitism; Jews were being deprived of citizenship rights and barred from the professions and many trades. Among the professions from which Jews were excluded was that of apothecary. This was done under a strict interpretation and application of the law of 1874 proclaiming that "No pharmacy may be opened without special permit of the Minister of the Interior. Directors of pharmacies may be 'strangers', up to 1878; after that, only in cases where there is no Roumanian pharmacy. New pharmacies may be opened only by Roumanians." Wolff (or Lupescu) was certainly no "Roumanian" in the eyes of the administrators of this law at a time when Jews were considered a foreign element. There is no evidence, nor even a suggestion, that he was ever converted to Christianity either before or after his marriage. Assuming, therefore, that he was a Jew by birth and faith, the legal obstacles in the way of his adopting the profession of pharmacist would appear to have been insurmountable.

To enable him to practise, three methods would have been available to him. First, denial of his Jewish origin. That would

¹ Narrated in Gunther's, *Inside Europe*.

have been difficult in a community like that of Jassy. Second, surreptitious payment to procure a licence. Because the issue of licences was in the hands of higher officials, such a payment would require to have been considerable, and Wolff, by all accounts, was a man of severely limited means, if not actually poor. Third, the influence and assistance of powerful friends or benefactors. That would presuppose some close connection with, either politicians in high places, or important government officials, or a member or members of the aristocracy. How could an unknown, penurious Jew of Jassy have obtained such a connection? If there were such a connection, was it by reason of service rendered on the one side or the other? Politically or with regard to officialdom, it is difficult to see what service a man in the position of Wolff could have rendered to merit the reward of so desirable a possession as an apothecary's licence. If the service were anything in relation to more exalted quarters, the matter becomes even more difficult because, of all the anti-semites in Roumania, none were so deep-rooted in their dislike of the Jews as the members of the reactionary, feudal aristocracy—and the majority of the Roumanian aristocracy, in those days, at least, was reactionary. There are, on the whole, considerable grounds for speculation as to the early life of Lupescu père.

Helena Lupescu's parentage becomes an even more interesting subject for study in relation to her mother. Who was the wife of the man Wolff who changed his name to Lupescu? One of the most curious things about the often-repeated story of Helena Lupescu is that, notwithstanding the pursuit by the hunters after information concerning her and the scouring into her past by her enemies, to unearth data that might discredit her, there has never been, at any time, in any account of her, a single reference to her mother beyond the statement that she was a devout adherent of the Roumanian Christian church. Her name has never been mentioned. Her parentage has never been as much as referred to by any writer, friendly, hostile or indifferent, in Roumania or outside it.

Some writers declare vaguely that while in Vienna, Wolff (or Lupescu) met "a Roman Catholic girl" and married her. Others state equally vaguely that Madame Wolff (or Lupescu) was a native of her husband's own birthplace, Jassy. Others again dismiss so important a member of Magda Lupescu's family as her mother by a curt statement that she was a Roumanian woman of the Roman Catholic faith.

Was she, then, a Viennese woman? The birth certificate of her daughter, Helena, would have provided the interesting information with regard to her mother's name, at least. If she were a native of Jassy, her own birth certificate, if available, would have been a first-hand source of information on the matter of her parentage. If, as is possible, there are no extant records of her birth,

the name and fame of so interesting a figure in the story of Roumania's "uncrowned queen" would have been known to someone in Jassy and must, sooner or later, have been disclosed so as to complete the records regarding the most important friend of King Carol. If she were a native of another town or village of Roumania, the same considerations apply. Somewhere, somehow, someone would have revealed something of her origin and family.

The omission from the Lupescu family tree of so essential a branch can hardly have been due to reticence on the part of Helena Lupescu's foes, unless there were something in the history which even they fought shy of revealing. It may be that pride of race and nation deterred them from besmirching the name of some good, pure Roumanian family in connection with so scandalous and baleful a matter as Helena Lupescu's sinister rôle in the Roumanian state. That explanation of, for example, the Iron Guard's restraint with regard to the maternal ancestry of their arch-enemy, is untenable. At no time did the Iron Guard exhibit any such sense of refinement or delicacy. On the contrary, the revelation of the Roumanian stock, on her mother's side, in Lupescu's ancestry would have been welcome to the anti-semitic fascists; they would have exploited the fact as a stern warning to all good Roumanians that peril and shame inevitably follow from the impious mixture of their pure blood with the tainted strain of the Jews. In Iron Guard dogma there was a quite well-defined Roumanian version of the Nazi "Rassenschande" clamour.

There is, next, the question of the marriage of Wolff (or Lupescu). Where did that take place and when? Some prelate or priest must have officiated in a church where records would have been kept. Some town clerk or village registrar would have inscribed in his registry the particulars of the union. In such a record, ecclesiastic or lay, the names and origins of the parties would be inscribed. Not even the date, place or other detail of the marriage has ever been given reference in anything written of Helena Lupescu. Any marriage certificate of her parents would have revealed her mother's name.

The marriage of a Christian maiden to a Jewish youth, in any town, village or hamlet of Roumania would, in latter days, be an unusual occurrence; in the days of Wolff's youth it would have been a major event, sensational and highly unpopular on both sides. In Jewish circles the name of the man who had "married out of the faith" would have been anathema; the Christian girl who besmirched her reputation by marriage with a despised Jew would have been considered to have brought shame on her family. That family would have been well known, notorious; the community around it, particularly in a provincial town like Jassy, would have discussed for many a long day the calamity that had befallen it and there would have been much gossip concerning the unfortunate family which it concerned intimately. The *mésalliance*

would have been the topic of conversation in many a home and in the church. Such an episode could not have been kept a secret for long, if at all. Yet, Lupescu mère not only remains a shadowy figure; she is completely unknown. This strange fact, again, is a matter for interesting speculation. Someone, it would seem, had an interest in keeping this alliance, if it ever took place, so close a secret that it bears all the character of a piquant mystery.

The difficulties surrounding the "facts" of Helena Lupescu's parentage are in no wise removed on consideration of her marriage with Captain Tampeanu. The marriage certificate would have disclosed the names, at least, of her father and mother; but the document has never been made public. That the marriage did take place appears to be unquestioned, though the available information regarding it is meagre, in the extreme. Where, when, and by whom it was solemnised has never been publicly mentioned. These details are not, however, of particular relevance or importance. Most apposite are the circumstances in so far as they relate to Helena Lupescu's alleged Jewish origin.

Tampeanu was of high-born parentage, as well as an army officer. In both respects, marriage with even a half-Jewess was a difficult venture, fraught with dangerous possibilities in a military career. To a Roumanian upper class family, union with a woman of Jewish blood was regarded as a breach of honour and a degrading act; in all probability it would have led to ostracism from family and class associates. There is no suggestion that Captain Tampeanu suffered at all in this way.

The Roumanian Army, officered exclusively from the noble and upper elements of society, had the most rigid and uncompromising ideas with regard to the Jews. It had the most stringent regulations forbidding the admission of Jews as officers. It was, generally, virulently anti-semitic in its outlook; in particular, its ruling caste belonged to the reactionary feudal estates which, politically and socially, were fundamentally hostile to the Jews. That hostility and the army's anti-semitic notions would have made the marriage of an officer with a woman of Jewish ancestry a socially revolutionary act, leading, in all probability, to the culprit's enforced abandonment of his military career.

Besides, as in other armies, it was a strict regulation that an officer intending to marry was obliged to have the consent of his appropriate superior. It was highly improbable that Captain Tampeanu would have obtained such consent to marry the half-Jewess, Helena Lupescu. It is equally unlikely that he did, in fact, marry her without the approval of his superior officer. Had he done so, his military career would have been brought to an abrupt conclusion and there is no suggestion that this happened.

On the contrary, Madame Tampeanu was not only received in her husband's army circle but she was a highly popular (according

to some accounts, the most popular) woman in it. The inference to be drawn from all this is that either her Jewish origin was not disclosed or that she was not, in fact, of Jewish origin at all.

An authenticated circumstance of Helena Lupescu's early life is that she was brought up as a Roman Catholic and educated in a convent. She was fresh from the convent when she met and married Captain Tampeanu. This leads to yet another remarkable feature of her career which would appear to have a bearing on the question of her ancestry and to add to the speculation regarding it.

Helena Lupescu, the alleged daughter of a Jew of Jassy, was admitted at a very early age, into the Couvent Diaconesele in Bucharest. She was educated and remained there until she reached maturity. This institution was a school as well as a convent. The curriculum was stiff. The system of education was based on the severest principles of the Roman Catholic faith and was designed to provide for the young women in the charge of the institution a religious training so thorough as to stamp their future lives with the high principles of the Holy Church. Discipline was of the sternest character.

There were many ordinary convents, for all classes, in Bucharest and Jassy. But the Couvent Diaconesele, near the Ministry of Education, was no ordinary convent. As an institution for the education and religious upbringing of girls it was one of the three most exclusive, most expensive, and most difficult to enter, in all Bucharest and probably, therefore, in all Roumania. The Couvent Diaconesele shared this distinction with the French Catholic Convents of Notre Dame and Sacré Cœur. The Couvent Diaconesele was German in character, the nuns and teaching staff were drawn from women of exclusively German birth. Its pupils were selected from the most aristocratic families in the country and, even then, the scrutiny of applications for admission was rigorous in the extreme. The most impeccable lineage was the first and most essential qualification; second-rank nobility aroused no enthusiasm! The companions and fellow pupils of Helena Lupescu were daughters of the bluest-blooded families in the country.

Nor was this the only restriction upon would-be entrants to the Couvent Diaconesele. The fees payable for education and maintenance were so high that only the wealthiest of the aristocracy could afford to send their daughters to it. The purpose of its founders and administrators was, of course, to limit, as drastically as possible, both the number and the quality of the fortunate pupils who might gain admission to it. Compared with the Couvent Diaconesele, as regards difficulty of entry, Eton College was almost a county council school.

There was yet a third exacting qualification for admission to this convent. Only the daughters of strictly orthodox Roman

Catholic families were accepted and only in the rarest cases were daughters of Roumanian non-Catholic families admitted. Christian faith and origin were, of course, rigidly indispensable prerequisites of applications for admission.

This aristocratic convent-school in Bucharest had an additional distinction which set it apart from all others. It was almost a Royal Foundation and enjoyed the august patronage of His Majesty King Carol the First of Roumania who, during his lifetime, bestowed on it his personal interest. This fact has a special interest in connection with the strange history of Helena Lupescu.

Let us recapitulate the generally accepted account of Helena Lupescu's history, and relate it to the fact that she was a pupil of the Couvent Diaconesele. She was the daughter of a Jew. Her father was in meagre circumstances. Her mother was unknown. How came this daughter of a humble Jewish apothecary of the small provincial town of Jassy to gain admission to the most exclusive, expensive, aristocratic and severely orthodox Roman Catholic convent-school in the capital? An unavoidable answer to that question is that important and unusual influences must have been brought to bear upon the convent authorities to secure the acceptance of a pupil so handicapped by the lack of means and lineage and by the fatal disqualification of Jewish birth. What were these influences? How and in what circumstances did they come to be exercised?

All these difficulties in the Lupescu family story—the humble Jewish apothecary's licence to practise as a chemist in face of the restrictions against Jews, his unusual marriage "out of the faith", the paucity of information about that marriage, the mystery about her mother's identity, the marriage of a half-Jewess with an aristocratic army officer, the complete absence of documentation regarding all these matters, the admission of a poor half-Jewish girl to the select, costly, religiously Christian orthodox convent—induce the posing of the question: Who is Helena (Magda) Lupescu?

There is an answer, so far only whispered in the most confidential circles closest to Helena Lupescu and the Royal House of Roumania. In conditions of war, it has been impossible to secure the appropriate documentation of the narrative that has been related to me.

Some twenty miles north of Bucharest lies one of the estates belonging to the Roumanian Royal House. It surrounds the township of Peris, midway between Bucharest and Ploesti. In recent years, the Peris estate has not been used much by the Roumanian royal family and it was rarely frequented by its members. But in the first years of the dynasty it held some importance. King Carol, first "Prince of the Roumanian Principalities", a stolid, typical German prince of the House of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, took a special interest in the Peris estate and devoted much attention to it. He had bucolic tastes and, as the

son of a minor principedom in the peaceful countryside of central Germany, far removed from the pursuits and diversions of the larger cities, he developed them into a genuine love of farm life. Indeed, he made agriculture a special study, made researches into new methods of farming and followed closely the trend of new agricultural ideas then evolving in rural Germany.

Prince Carol, as he was then, became something of a gentleman-farmer, though the limited means of a small German principedom did not permit him to indulge, to any large extent, his tastes and interests in land development. His nomination to the throne of the newly created Kingdom of Roumania gave him the opportunity and the facilities of pursuing his hobby. He found the fertile and, at that time, primitively developed land of the Peris countryside admirably suited to his purposes. He initiated his own scheme of model farming and developed it.

The royal model farms of the Peris estate became, in their way, a notable contribution to Roumanian agriculture and King Carol took a particular delight in watching them evolve. They were developed under his own direct and personal supervision and he became quite the enthusiastic farmer, the squire, as well as the overlord, of the peasantry in the district. Particularly close were the associations of the royal squire with the inhabitants of Peris, then little more than a hamlet. The King-farmer was known personally to every man, woman and child in it; with some, he was on the most cordial terms. As a farmer Carol I dropped his customary sternness of manner and became very good-natured, even jovial. He was highly popular in the district, whose inhabitants regarded him less as a monarch (the notion of a sovereign was then a novel one in Roumania, in any case) than as a benevolent patron, much in the manner of the English squire or lord of the manor.

Squire Carol had a keen eye for a pretty woman as well as for a fertile piece of land. His appraising glance fell upon the village school teacher. The young woman was attractive and, by reason of her calling, conspicuous in a small community of illiterate peasants. The farmer-king sought her society and found, in her, an interest not confined to things of the soil and a pleasant diversion from them as well as from the rigidities of the Court.

Carol was then in his middle fifties. His marriage with the Princess Elizabeth Pauline Ottilia of Wied, the famous royal poetess whom the larger world knew as "Carmen Sylva", was not the happy romance which the world generally believed it was. After the death, at the age of three, of their only child, a daughter, they became estranged. Carmen Sylva "had an expressed distaste for marriage, with its ties and restrictions . . . with her rich and passionate nature, and her powerful creative impulses, she found she needed more than her husband could give her . . . The Prince and

Princess were, in most respects, utterly unsuited to each other. . . ."¹ The estrangement became acute when the birth of her child left a physical disability which made it impossible for the Princess to have any more children.

There was yet another factor which produced not only estrangement but hostility between Carol I and Carmen Sylva. He objected strongly to her intimate friendship with Helene Vacarescu, a brilliant young Roumanian poetess, artist and musician. So intensely did Carol resent this friendship that he ordered both the Queen and Helene Vacarescu to leave the country. For three years, Carmen Sylva wandered aimlessly abroad. Finally, she returned to her mother at her Castle of Segenhaus, in Germany.

The dramatic story of this broken royal romance and the friendship of Carmen Sylva for Helene Vacarescu was the subject of the novel, *l'Exilée*, by Pierre Loti, the French author, who was a personal friend of the Queen since his meeting with her and her confidante in Venice.

The estrangement between Carol I and Carmen Sylva was never healed; it grew deeper and more complete. By the "nineties" their childless marriage had become, to all intents and purposes, non-existent; and the friendship between the farmer-monarch and the school teacher of Peris ripened and deepened.

The middle-aged prince had a competitor for the affections of the school teacher. He was a much younger man, indeed, a youth, with a knowledge of popular chemical dispensing. He was the assistant of the local chemist who dispensed for the common ailments of the villagers of Peris. He, too, paid his court to the pretty, intelligent young school teacher. But squire-archy, particularly when associated with royalty and enhanced with the aura of sovereignty, placed the enamoured chemist's assistant at a hopeless disadvantage.

In due course, misfortune befell the school-teacher friend of the royal squire. She was about to become a mother—a pretty scandal in a village community of peasants. The King and the school teacher! The way of escape for both pointed, obviously, to the village chemist. A marriage was arranged. The pair left Peris for Jassy, where the school teacher gave birth to a daughter. She was called Helena. The villagers knew the chemist's assistant as Wolff; in Jassy he became known as Lupescu, which was the Roumanian translation of his original name.

If the romantic story of the attachment between the grand-uncle² of Carol the Second and the school teacher of Peris be true, much that is bewildering in the origin and ancestry of Helena Lupescu is

¹ Elizabeth Burgoyne: *Carmen Sylva, Queen and Woman*.

² Carol I's brother, Prince Leopold, who would have succeeded to the throne, died before him, in June 1905. The succession passed to Leopold's eldest son, Ferdinand, father of Carol II.

explainable. It throws light on the mystery surrounding her mother's identity. It would account for the wholly unusual fact of a Jew becoming possessed of a licence to practise as a pharmacist in a town like Jassy; an order from King Carol the First would provide it without demur or inquiry. It would explain Helena Lupescu's upbringing as a Roman Catholic; the farmer-king would not have wished to see his child brought up in any other faith. Nor would he have wished to expose his daughter and the school teacher of Peris to the possibility of scrutiny into the past and the consequent whispers of idle and malicious tongues. Hence the removal of Helena to Bucharest. It would solve the otherwise inexplicable mystery of her admission into and education by one of the three most exclusive and expensive and religiously orthodox convents in Bucharest. It would explain, moreover, why the Couvent Diaconesele was chosen for her education and religious training and why the administrators of that institution, normally so careful about the quality and antecedents of prospective pupils, accepted Helena Lupescu, apparently without demur. The patron of this august institution was His Majesty King Carol the First.

This account of Helena Lupescu's origin would explain, also, why it is that none of the salient documents relating to it have ever been revealed or become known. It may be suggested, however, that had it been allowed to become known that she was not, in fact, a Jewess by birth, much, if not all, of the trials and tribulations of Carol the Second and all the antagonistic ferocity with which she was assailed and hounded throughout her association with him would have been avoided and discredited. The answer is that this would have necessitated the disclosure of a skeleton in the cupboard of the Roumanian Royal House, involving the good name and repute of the dynasty's founder, whose record for purity, if not puritanism, was otherwise unstained. The peccadillo of Peris, if revealed, might have had adverse effects on the dignity of the Crown.

It has been suggested, however, that there was a still deeper reason for the silence regarding the Peris episode and what followed it. It has been held that the school teacher of Peris was herself a Jewess. In that event, the illicit union between her and the King would have involved an infinitely greater scandal than a "normal" affair of the kind. An association between the monarch and a woman of Jewish birth would have been not merely a scandal; in a country corroded with anti-semitism and, at the time, passing through one of its worst phases of Jew hatred, the affair might have caused repercussions of dangerous national consequence to the dynasty and the tranquillity of the nation. Hence, it is suggested, the unusual precautions to keep the matter secret and to "cover it up". Hence, the exceptional pains to secure that the child of the union should be brought up in the Roman Catholic faith, apart from the natural desire of the father to have the daughter raised in



HELENA LUPESCU

his own religion. Hence, the subsequent absence of documents. Hence, the reluctance to repudiate, in any way, the allegations of the Wolff (Lupescu) paternity. The flaw in this suggestion is that, in the light of the widespread antagonism against the Jews at the time, and the restrictive legislation affecting them, it is unlikely that a Jewess would have been permitted to become a school teacher, especially in a small village like Peris.

There is another factor in the unusual history of Helena Lupescu. While few positive conclusions concerning ancestry can be drawn from physical appearance, it is worth while to consider the person of Helena Lupescu as last seen in Bucharest in January, 1938. She was then forty-four years of age and in the full bloom of womanhood. She was tall, perfectly proportioned and statuesque. She had the "grand manner", combining dignity with a singular grace and charm. The scribes who had so often described, in luscious phrase, the famous "Titian hair" had, in this respect, underwritten their theme. Her hair shone with the brilliant tints of burnished gold, yet it was not golden nor red. Her eyes were wide and of greenish hue, the nose small and straight, the mouth delicately bowed, the lips full. Her features were perfectly Greek and her complexion was of an unusually delicate, cream-like pallor.

There was nothing at all about Helena Lupescu to suggest, even remotely, the physical or facial characteristics of the Jewish race. If it were possible to categorise the nationality of an individual, by reason of physical outwardness, she must have been allocated to German ancestry.

It is apposite, also, to observe that people who came into close association with the Roumanian royal family, and knew Helena Lupescu well, invariably noted and commented upon the quite striking and conspicuous resemblance between her and Carol's sister, the Princess Elizabeth, who married and divorced King George of Greece. Helena Lupescu's critics remarked, acidly, that she was deliberately, but cleverly, affecting the appearance and manner of a Hohenzollern.

I add, without comment, a quotation from a London newspaper, dated January 4, 1926:

"The story of the Roumanian Crown Prince grows more complicated.

For it now appears that he did not give up his right to the throne to return to his 'peasant wife' whom he left in 1920 to marry, for State reasons, a Greek Princess. It seems that, on the contrary, there is a third 'woman in the case'—a Madame, or Princess Lupescu."

"MASTER OF MY COUNTRY"

THERE MUST BE many men in Europe, particularly in Britain and France (most of these Frenchmen are now, probably, the prisoners of Adolf Hitler or refugees in the United States), who regret, in the year 1941, that they did not take Carol the Second of Roumania more seriously, when he was at the zenith of his power. The course of events since 1938, at any rate, might have been different; certainly the German "drive to the East" might have been not quite so swift, so easy, so bloodless, or so profitable for the Nazis of the Third Reich.

No man for whom destiny appeared to cast a significant rôle in the intertwined affairs of nations has suffered more than he from the failure of statesmen and publicists to understand and take him seriously. To be so regarded was a major passion with Carol. In his youth, it was obscured by the waywardness of his temperament and his resort to diversion to escape from the trammels of irksome influences around him. In his manhood and kingship he strove hard to establish himself in the mind of the world, outside his own country, as a man of serious intent and purpose. He was not successful.

His failure was, to him, a personal tragedy, and not the least of the causes which led to the misfortunes of his régime and his nation. Inside Roumania, the politicians and the place-seekers took him seriously enough because he stood athwart their path, but their appraisal of his character did not go far beyond the frontiers. He was understood better in Central and Eastern Europe but, in the West, there was an obstinate refusal to accord him the rôle and authority of a strong, purposeful and intelligent ruler, a rôle for which he sought passionately to demonstrate his capacity.

To an important extent, the difficulties with and rupture between him and the members of his own family arose from the same cause. His mother, Queen Marie, set the pace for the disagreements and the strained relationship that existed between him and his immediate relatives and which had their inevitable repercussions outside the family circle. She refused to take her son seriously. Herself a woman of strong will, accustomed from her earliest days of married life masterfully to direct the lives of her family and to essay control in the affairs of State, she could not discard the sense of maternal authority which she exercised over Carol, as a boy.

When he became King she declined to forget that, for a long time, Carol was an errant youth, and quite obstinately she refused to appreciate that he had not only reached manhood, but had developed into a man of firm character and had become a monarch

with ideas of the seriousness of his duty and the resolution to carry them into effect. She would not take him seriously. In the result, he rebelled against her and she drifted away from him until she died, broken-hearted and alone. That, too, was a tragedy for Carol; it enhanced in him the sense of defeat, the belief that he was baulked of his passion to be regarded as a serious man and a serious monarch.

The reaction in him was that he came to accentuate the seriousness of his outlook and his moods, and to strengthen his determination to destroy the illusion of the weak, easily influenced King. He developed a certain gruffness, an aggressiveness of manner; he grew to be impatient with the politicians who reciprocated, generally, by a discreet but profound dislike of him. When they disagreed with him, or when he declined to accept their policies, he expressed his disapproval in the most direct and decisive way. Many a statesman left his presence smarting in anger under the lash of his tongue. Carol was a master of the forceful expression and the colourful—and offensive—phrase. His invective was biting and vivid.

When I sat by his side in the Royal Palace in Bucharest, the telephone on the table at his elbow rang. I made a gesture to suggest that he might wish me to leave, but he bade me remain. I gathered from the conversation that he was being asked whether a certain general might receive another decoration. Carol almost shouted into the telephone: "Certainly not. The old dodderer. What has he done to deserve it? He has more impudence than ability. He has more than he has earned. He is lucky to have what he has got. Tell him if he's not careful I'll take the whole lot away from him. The old fool." He turned to me with a smile full of satisfaction, clearly implying: "That's how to deal with them. That will show you that I am the boss here." The interruption came at a point in our conversation when, in answer to a question of mine, he had declared with emphasis, "I am master of my country".

I had brought with me, from London, on that occasion, the universally accepted impression of Carol the Second as something of an irresponsible play-actor in the realm of politics and international affairs, a man of mediocre parts and wayward capacities. I saw him, as all the world estimated him to be, a dabbler, of severely limited knowledge and vision, whom birth rather than proven worth had given a part and the right to assert authority over men and sway the fate of a nation. He was to me, then, a meddler in affairs naturally beyond his mental reach, whose vacillations, born of inadequate understanding of the fundamental principles of government, had led to internal disruptions in his state and to disquiet abroad. I believed him to possess, moreover, all the arrogances derived from mediocrity emboldened by power.

The events which had preceded my visit to Bucharest and which had inspired my mission, not only lent colour to these impressions, but appeared to confirm them. There had been general elections.

A host of parties had contended for the favour of the electors. The leading parties, the National Peasants, the Liberals and the Iron Guard had scored heavily, the National Peasants securing first place, the Iron Guard, ominously, second. Among the "also rans" were the National Christians, a small, nondescript aggregation of religious zealots and political conservatives professing the tenets of super-nationalism and openly proclaiming the racial inanities of Hitlerism and the political nostrums of the Nazi Fuehrer. In the forefront of the party programme was the ruthless extirpation of the Jews from the political, social and economic life of Roumania—"drastic and complete elimination", as the National Christian Party leader, Octavian Goga himself, put it to me, at a later stage.

The National Christians secured less than ten per cent of the votes at the ballot booths and were thus in a hopeless and helpless minority, as compared with the other and leading parties. Yet, Carol, ignoring the result of the elections and in defiance of the constitutional practice, summoned Goga to the premiership and his party to power. Here was a clear thwarting of democratic principles, even in so primitive a democracy as Roumania. Here was a violent and revolutionary negation of the constitutional rights of the Roumanian people. Here was a deliberate affront to the Western democracies, fresh in their bewilderment at the "Peace in our time" settlement at Munich, which had betrayed and surrendered the young democratic Republic of Czechoslovakia to the aggressive brutality of Hitler, under the threat of war.

Elsewhere I shall discuss the motives which inspired Carol to this strange adventure in high politics and international complexities. Now, it appeared as a crass assumption of autocratic authority by a king; there was little doubt that the Goga Government was but the façade, the transparent mask, to cover the personal dictatorship of the monarch. I shared, at this time, the universal view that the political antics of King Carol could find their explanation only in his immature conceptions of statecraft, and in his want of understanding of political trends. In the light of Europe's growing sense of disquiet and in view of the events that gave rise to it, Carol's manœuvres in Bucharest were grave. In the light of his character and ability, as the world estimated them, they could not be serious. So it was thought.

Far different was the intellectual quality of the man, as revealed in the discussion I had with him, on that day in January, 1938, on the internal and international meaning of his Fascist government.

I was not a little discouraged by the heavy formalities which preceded my audience. The palace itself was gaunt and forbidding in its oppressive overloading of marble and gilt, barbarically splendid and opulent, but garish and with little refinement of taste. There was some relief in the ante-room into which I was ushered by a resplendent flunkey in plush and gold. This chamber was

bright, well lit, decorously furnished and "humanised" by pleasant pictures on the walls. My sense of greater ease was disturbed, however, by the entrance of an alarmingly magnificent figure in the full panoply of gorgeous military uniform, a Hollywood ensemble of bright blue and red, golden braid and tassels, and shining, clanking sword. The King's Aide-de-Camp, a pleasant, flaxen-haired youth, stopped abruptly after a few steps towards me, drew himself up stiffly and bowed his head in a sharp, jerky motion. He bade me write my name on a piece of paper, bowed again, disappeared, and returned a few moments later with the remark that "His Majesty will now receive you".

The clock on the mantelpiece chimed three, the hour I had been instructed precisely to await the King. I followed the Aide-de-Camp to the adjoining room. As the door shut softly behind me, I observed the King of Roumania seated behind a large table, ornate, but not lavish, in style and businesslike, with neatly arranged papers, a photograph of the Crown Prince Michael, a heavy inkstand and two gilt telephones. I took in some gaily-coloured picture of rural theme, a large window overlooking a fine garden and the quiet, comfortable "smoking-room" furniture. The work-room of a man of affairs.

I bowed to the seated King who rose at my entrance, walked round the table towards me and, with a smile, extended his hand in greeting. He was in the uniform of a Field Marshal, khaki and gold, with many decorations. King Carol expressed his pleasure that I had come "to visit" him, hoped that I had found Roumania "agreeable" and that my stay in his country would be "happy and interesting". He declared that he knew and had read the newspaper I represented, but added: "I do not share its political opinions, of course. You would not expect me to, would you? But everyone is entitled to his views, don't you think? I respect those with other opinions, so long as they are honest and courageous." I concurred.

This introductory exchange of pleasantries gave me time to study the man before me. I found him to be tall, sturdily built, in the early stages of, and showing a decided tendency towards, middle-age corpulency. He was then in his forty-fifth year. His face was fleshy and full, his complexion fresh and florid, his eyes bright blue and keen. The light, sandy-coloured hair of his head and small tooth-brush moustache gave him a much fairer appearance than shown by the photographs of him. He was of an indeterminate type, part English, part German, part Slav—the strains of his English mother, German father and Russian grandmother. His English was faultlessly constructed, though a slight but perceptible guttural note in his accent betrayed his Teutonic forebears. His manner was forceful and suggestive of energy and vitality.

He bade me be seated in the armchair by the side of the table and, taking his place in the high-backed chair behind it, leaned

back comfortably and said, "Now, what would you like to know?" I replied that I had made out a list of questions and enquired if His Majesty would like to consider them before making his answers. "No, that will not be necessary," said Carol, "I can deal with your points as we go along. I do not think there will be any difficulty about that." I deemed it expedient, as well as right, that I should not leave him under any wrong impression with regard to the purpose of the interview, and inquired if it were understood that my intention, subject to his consent, was to publish his comments. "I understand," Carol replied. "But there is one condition. It must be understood, and I shall require to ask your assurance, that nothing will be published without my approval. You will submit to me what you propose to write before transmitting it to London. Is that understood?"

Before I could reply, he added, by way of explanation and, I thought, to soften the note of command in his tone and phrase: "I may, and probably shall, say something in the course of our conversation which cannot be published. If I do, it will be because I wish to make things clear to you and to give you an exact understanding of my views. Besides, I have had a raw deal, you know, at the hands of journalists, in the past. You will appreciate that I must be careful. I hope you won't take that amiss." I assured the King that I understood and gave him the required undertaking. I asked Carol if he had any objection to my taking notes of his responses. He had none: and with my notebook on his table I wrote as he spoke. There was not the least hesitation in his replies to my questions.

I began by asking if the then Government of Roumania were not, in fact, a royal dictatorship under a constitutional guise.

"That is a basic question," Carol replied, "but you must understand that the terms 'dictatorship' and 'democracy' are not of universal application. They are capable of varying interpretations in varying circumstances. They may mean one thing in one country and, in certain conditions, something entirely different in another and in other circumstances." He elaborated his point.

"Democracy cannot have the same connotation in Roumania as it has in England. Our civilisation is younger. Your country has a parliamentary tradition of long history. It began with Oliver Cromwell; ours is only seventy years old. That in itself makes for a different conception of democracy. Sentiments and education are not the same in every people and cannot be."

I suggested that, if the government which the King had selected could be interpreted, as in fact it was, as His Majesty's assumption of personal rule, a royal autocracy, this was a retrograde step, in the sense of constitutional monarchy, as understood in the Western democracies. Carol replied:

"The rôle of the sovereign in Roumania is not that of the monarch

in other countries. The King in other countries must do what his ministers tell him. Here the ministers do what *I* tell *them*. Why is this so? It is because of parties and politics in this country. The only element in the state which can maintain a strict line between them and so make for stability is the Sovereign. That is the reason for the difference between the place of the monarch in my country and elsewhere."

This statement caused much difficulty when I submitted the transcription of my notes to the King, for his approval. There was a long and anxious discussion concerning it between Carol (through Ernest Urdareanu, the Lord Great Chamberlain) and myself. Sir Reginald Hoare, the British Minister, who had also been summoned to the palace for the occasion, expressed his surprise, when he read the first draft of the interview, that the King should have given expression so forcibly to such candid views on his function as monarch.

Urdareanu explained that the King had expressly instructed him to inform me that the text, as transcribed, was exact. "His Majesty did use these words and they correctly translate his views. But, you must see that he cannot permit publication of them. You can imagine what use would be made of them, in present conditions." I understood this perfectly but, as a journalist, was reluctant to lose so "meaty" a part of my interview. Here was something which would set Europe talking. I argued and pleaded for its retention. There was much telephoning between Urdareanu and Carol. The King was adamant; on serious reflection he could not consent to the publication of so dangerous a sentiment. Anxious to preserve the theme, I was willing to surrender the text and suggested a compromise in a form in which the theme was given expression but which "took the sting" out of the King's words. The King accepted my suggestion and when the interview was published, a few days later, this part of it appeared in this way: "I suggested to the King that while in other countries the King does what his Ministers tell him, here in Roumania it was the reverse, as it seemed to me," to which Carol replied:

"Because of parties and politics in this country the Sovereign is the only stable element which can keep a strict line between them."

I put it to the King bluntly, that his views on monarchy in Roumania could bear no other interpretation than that of dictatorship. To this he retorted:

"If the word 'dictatorship' is applied to Roumania, it means what I have said, and nothing more. But there is no suggestion of a dictatorship here, as you understand it.

"If certain things in the state are bad, that is a matter for my conscience. But my intention is not to take such measures as are implied in the term 'dictatorship'.

"My government is based on the authority and spirit of the Executive Power—that is, the Sovereign and his Government. The spirit of our Constitution is—the Monarch and his Government acting together."

My next question expressed the bewilderment of foreign opinion with regard to his nomination of a government whose members represented a fractional minority of the electorate. This action, I ventured, seemed to be a negation of all democratic principle. Carol appeared to be somewhat resentful at the suggestion and said:

"I do not understand why my government should be considered as representing only a minority. I do not know if elections always translate public opinion accurately. I do not care for elections. The rôle of the Sovereign is to judge what really is the public spirit. It cannot be denied that, in Roumania, that spirit is in the direction of extreme nationalism. It was cleverer, therefore, on my part, and more in accord with public sentiment, to summon to power a party more nationalist than the others.

"My choice of a government was not dependent on what might be said about my action elsewhere, but was based solely on the necessity of saving a certain situation and on what would serve the national needs. I passed over other parties when I summoned this government because I considered my action to be in the best interests of my people. As I am here to judge what is best for my country, I eliminated certain groups. That is all."

This reply seemed to me to be much too easy, if not glib. Ignoring the touch of acerbity in Carol's tone, I made bold to indicate that I did not consider his answer covered the matter raised in my question. If the Government of M. Goga was, as I understood, one of the party of extreme nationalists, how could the King's selection of it be "the strict line between the parties" to which His Majesty had alluded earlier? Carol was politely acid in his reply:

"If I may say so, I do not think you quite understand the inwardness of the political situation in Roumania.

"There has been an alliance between the Iron Guard and the National Peasant Party. Do you realise what that means? The Iron Guard is not only extreme nationalist, it is a terror organisation. It has the support and the aid of a foreign power—you know whom I mean.

"The National Peasant Party does not realise that, sooner or later, it will be exploited by the Iron Guard and then swamped. What follows? The nation will be in the grip of an insurrectionary, terrorist, extreme nationalist organisation of fanatics in the pay of foreign enemies of Roumania.

"What do you think I should have done? Call them to power in the name of democracy? That would have been madness and I am not mad. I understand things better than that.

"I accepted the trend of public opinion towards nationalism, but I chose the least of its evils by calling to office an extreme nationalist group. I know it has little influence and as long as I am here it will not have any. But I have followed the trend of public opinion, have I not? And I have rather spoiled the game of the Iron Guard and its friends, have I not?"

"What would the world have said if I had called the Iron Guard or a combination which it would have dominated? Would it have applauded me for having acted constitutionally and for behaving as a democrat in giving powers to the parties elected by a majority? Of course not. It would have said I had sold Roumania to the foreign power. I have taken good care that this will not happen. But no one seems to understand."

This statement by King Carol was not included in my published interview and is given now for the first time. The reasons for this omission, during the course of this Roumanian crisis and in the then state of Europe, after Munich, will be evident. Carol did not mention Nazi Germany by name, but the manner in which he referred to the "foreign power" left no room for doubt about the country and the men he had in mind. He meant no other. His direct onslaught on the Iron Guard could not be publicly mentioned either. To have done so would have had serious repercussions in Roumania; it might have led to civil war.

Never had a king, in modern times, been so frankly hostile to a political party, the one which, only a few weeks before, secured second place in a general election and, by reason of it, was in the direct line of succession to government. I had no hesitation in agreeing to expunge the whole passage from the published text of the interview. I publish it now, when Roumania no longer exists as an independent state and the king who uttered the words no longer rules. Carol's statement explains an action which, at the time, was misunderstood and wrongly regarded as a betrayal of his country to the enemies of the western democracies.

I passed on to the political texture of the Goga Government. In so far as the government was composed of the leading members of the Fascist National Christian Party, with a proclaimed pro-Nazi as Prime Minister, did this not mean that the King had accepted a Fascist policy in the direction of national affairs? I enquired. Carol replied:

"This government is authoritarian and I think that is necessary. My people must feel there is order in the country. Who can tell what may happen in the state of Europe as it is. You must try not to mix up internal with foreign policy.

"In my decision, the issue of Fascism or other political system does not arise. In any case, when you call a particular régime by a certain name, the implications depend on definition. It is simple just to take a name and describe a régime by it. But you must

investigate the régime deeper than that. I have not adopted Fascism or any other system. My government's internal programme is one thing. Foreign policies and alliances are another. There is not necessarily any connection between an internal programme and foreign policies."

I pursued the question. I was not satisfied that the King and government were so far apart as Carol's reply appeared to suggest. I continued by asking if His Majesty were satisfied with and approved the Goga Government's internal programme which bore so striking a resemblance to the political creed of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Without hesitation Carol answered:

"I am master of my country. The government is my government. It must have my approval. The day I am not satisfied with its conduct of affairs I shall require a change. If I am not pleased with the government I shall have no hesitation in asking it to go away. And it will go away, if that happens."

There could be no mistake about the purport of this remarkable statement; none of the words required "definition" and they were spoken with deliberation and emphasis. I anticipated that, on reconsideration of the text which I submitted to the King, he would insist on its elimination. To my surprise and delight, as a journalist, he raised no objection and the statement remained unaltered. As was to be expected, this passage was "lifted" from the text and given full prominence in the world press.

Carol's emphatic declaration of mastery in his country was interpreted, naturally, as a proclamation of dictatorship and in London, as elsewhere, he was the subject of much adverse criticism on that score. In British Labour circles, in particular, criticism of the Roumanian monarch was fierce; a new dictator had been added to the menaces that brooded over Europe. Indeed, the newspaper which I represented and which published the interview, with this statement as the "lead", came in for angry criticism on the part of certain prominent members of the Labour Party for having given publicity to the anti-democratic royal dictator of Roumania who, by his acceptance of the Fascist government of a minority group, had shown his intention to adhere to the policies of the Berlin-Rome Axis.

My view that this was a misunderstanding of the real purpose of Carol's statement and a serious misreading of the situation in Roumania, in so far as it concerned international affairs, was not accepted. I held that Carol's words must be interpreted in the context of the internal situation in Roumania and in the light of his views, as I understood them in consequence of my conversation with him. The King's apparently provocative declaration meant, I thought, that, in the event of the Goga Government taking any action towards alignment with the Fascist powers or producing measures, within the country, of a decidedly Fascist character,

Carol would intervene and dismiss the government. This view was corroborated, in my estimation, by his statement in another part of the interview that:

“The government’s internal programme does not affect our alliances and has no connection with policies abroad.”

I expressed the opinion, moreover, that because of the ominous advance of the extremist Fascist Iron Guard and the infiltration of Hitlerism in Roumania, the strong hand of Carol was a deterrent which would prevent the country falling into the Nazi-Fascist orbit. As a democrat, I could not fail to view with distaste the assumption of autocratic rule by a monarch, but, in the dangerous conditions prevailing in Roumania this was the lesser evil and might, indeed, be of advantage to European democracy, in the event, as seemed likely and imminent, of a European conflict. I pleaded for sympathetic consideration of Carol’s position and urged that he should be supported rather than criticised adversely. My views did not prevail.

There came a moment during my conversation with the King when I referred specifically to the Iron Guard and Nazi Germany. Carol banged the table with his fist, saying:

“I must do everything I can to break extremism. There is a Beast abroad. We must smash and destroy the Beast. I may appear, at the moment, to be feeding the Beast. But, in reality, the measures I am taking are designed to stop the Beast and I shall destroy him.”

That statement, also, did not appear in the published account of my interview. Regretful as I was that it had to be excluded, the necessity for doing so, in the critical European situation which was developing in January, 1938, was clear. Internally and internationally, its publication would have had perilous consequences. There could be no room for dubiety, however, as to where Carol’s political sympathies lay and the course on which he intended to direct Roumanian policies. This was not appreciated in western Europe, at all.

The interview concluded with a lengthy interchange of question and answer on the subject of the Jews whose position, and even existence, in Roumania was seriously threatened by the proclaimed policies of the Goga Government, policies, of rabidly anti-Semitic character, which created widespread indignation and protest in the European democracies and in the United States. Carol’s views on this grave matter, I reserve for a later chapter on the Jewish problem in Roumania.

There was a piquant and “human” episode on the conclusion of the interview, which had lasted fifteen minutes longer than the hour the King had allotted to me. Carol looked at the clock and

with a smile said, "I am sorry we must end our talk now. I have given you a quarter of an hour more than I intended. I should have liked to carry on this interesting and, I hope, useful conversation. But, you know, kings can be busy men, as well." He rose and I followed suit. He walked with me to the door; we shook hands and I bowed myself out.

On the landing outside, I noticed a lift, heavily gilt and decorated. I pushed a button at the side and in a disc to the right a large letter "M" flashed in a brilliant crimson electric light. I pulled aside the sliding door and entered a magnificent red plush "room". Just as I had closed the door and was about to press the button to descend, King Carol emerged from his study, advanced towards the lift and stopped on seeing me inside. I realised, with a start, that the letter "M" stood for "Majesty" and that I had taken possession of the King's private lift to his own apartments.

Embarrassed, I hastily opened the lift door, apologised to Carol for my mistake, and moved to step out, holding the door for him to enter. The King laughed. "Not at all," he said. "Don't worry. Carry on. You take the lift. I'll just use the stairs. It will do me good anyway." He ran down the stairs briskly, two at a time. As I, in the gold and red plush royal conveyance, passed him, he waved a hand to me and shouted "Cheerio".

I have related, textually and in detail, this account of my interview, in January, 1938, with King Carol the Second, as a comment upon and criticism of the current conception of the man and his political intelligence. Whatever may have been the rightness or error of his ideas of politics generally and of his notions of his own functions in the state, the expression of his views in my conversation with him was that of a ruler whom it would have been wiser to have taken more seriously.

CHAPTER VI

FASCIST PRELUDE TO LONDON

IT TOOK Carol the Second eight years to achieve the full measure of his authority as the central and pivotal factor in the government of Roumania. If, in accordance with democratic ideas of government in Western Europe, he had not secured popular consent to that authority, he had established the fact that his was the master hand which held the helm of the ship of state and which might guide it progressively towards a strong but constitutional monarchy.

These were eight difficult and trying years. The "parties"—and they were numerous—were restive and resentfully hostile to his decision not to confine himself to the colourfully quiescent rôle of

kingship. When he came to the throne in June, 1930, Carol found his country torn and bewildered by the inter-party conflicts of the politicians, wrangling less on questions of principle than on pseudo-political feuds and personal ambitions. Economically, the condition of the country was bad, in the extreme. Corruption, as always, was rife. He determined to cut across political differences and to take control himself, though through nominally elected governments. Many politicians found themselves, in consequence, without hope of office and relegated to the dim background of affairs. Naturally, politicians fought hard and resolutely against the King's intrusion into the political field which they regarded, for so long, as exclusively their preserve. A strong and intelligent monarch was something new, and revolutionary, and the politicians did not take kindly to the idea. The political opposition to Carol grew steadily in depth and extent.

Carol, holding that the backward political and economic conditions of Roumania required more drastic and effective handling than could be secured through the wranglings of professional and place-seeking politicians, resisted and successfully countered their opposition. In a country where political manœuvrings had reached a fine art, he proved himself a shrewd and agile manipulator and he succeeded in outwitting his opponents. Whether the issues were real problems of internal policy or administration, or whether they centred round his association with Madame Lupescu—and his opponents saw to it that all questions centred round that—Carol not only held his ground but emerged the master. In the process much that was good for Roumania was achieved. There were reforms in land tenure, progress in education and development in industry. National finances were better balanced. Conditions were far from satisfactory, on Western standards, but, on the whole, Carol's eight years of rule brought to Roumania an era of more stability and progress than it had ever experienced.

By the end of 1937, in the eighth year of his reign, Carol had reached the full height of his power. Within Roumania he had imposed his almost undisputed authority, although, behind him, there was always the challenge of the sulking Maniu and his powerful National Peasant Party and the more ominous threat of the growing forces of Codreanu's Iron Guard. Most significantly, he had made, too, an important conquest abroad; he had almost destroyed the generally accepted illusion that he was no more than "the playboy Prince" and he had gone a long way towards laying the ghost of the "royal philanderer" that had haunted him since his early youth. The popular press of the world had been reluctant and had, indeed, obstinately refused to bury so piquant a legend, always certain to provide "a good story" in a sensation-hungry world. That press evinced little interest, far less concern, in the serious affairs of Roumania and little news about that country

could be printed without reference, in some form or another, to "Carol's woman friend, the Titian-haired Jewess, Magda Lupescu". To omit such a reference was regarded as a almost major incompetence in the newspaper offices, and in the result, it was never omitted, no matter how blatant the irrelevance and no matter how mischievous the consequences.

There were many mischievous consequences of the persistent repetition of the Lupescu theme, avidly seized by Carol's enemies at home and abroad to undermine him, to cause disaffection and to fire the flames of revolt against him. The journalistic hunters after the "good story" did not realise or did not trouble to appreciate to what extent they were playing into the hands of the anti-Semitic Fascists of Europe who, in exploiting the newspaper "stories" and using them to show how the King was "discrediting the good name of Roumania, abroad", thereby laid the train of dynamite which, eventually, blasted Carol from his throne and shattered the independence of his country.

But, in the more responsible milieus of international affairs and in the Foreign Offices, it was now, and at long last, beginning to be realised that Carol was a good deal more than a "royal lover" and that, on the contrary, he had manifested qualities of statesmanship which might be of the utmost importance in the increasing tempo and dangers of a quickly changing Europe. Proof was that, in the autumn of 1937, Carol's suggestion that he should pay a State Visit to London (a long cherished wish of his) was readily accepted.

Fascism, at the end of 1937, was marching fast towards the zenith of its arrogance and rapacity. Mussolini was master of Abyssinia. The Fuehrer and the Duce had combined with El Caudillo Franco to complete the conquest of democratic Spain. The Nazis had "turned the heat" on Austria. Hitler was already bellowing threats against Czechoslovakia and it was, clearly, only a matter of time before the onslaught against the finest democratic republic in Europe was to be launched, on the cynical and lying pretext of "the liberation of the persecuted German minority" of the Sudetenland. Using as a basis Italian ambitions to dominate the Balkans and Hungarian "revisionist" claims against Roumania and Czechoslovakia, Hitler was beginning to unfold his plan for the breaking-up of the Little Entente, of which Roumania was an essential and integral part, as a preliminary to launching his great war which, he believed, was to make him master of Europe, the conqueror of the British Empire and the ruler of the world.

The Fascist idea of the "Super State under the inspired rule of a Master Man" was being assiduously spread wherever there appeared a fruitful field in which to plant the poison seed. In Roumania, that fertile soil was the Iron Guard and the poison plant was already in flower there, well fertilised by Nazi money

and arms:¹ Codreanu, its leader, claimed two million adherents, active members in the organisation of political terrorism to which, to make its appeal more palatable and more consistent with Fascist philosophy, he had given the new name of the "All For The Fatherland Party". Codreanu had, by this time, boldly and openly proclaimed his acceptance of Fascist doctrine and had declared his allegiance to Mussolini and Hitler. He had gone so far as to state publicly, "within forty-eight hours of my coming to power I shall proclaim Roumania a Fascist state and shall enter into an alliance with Germany and Italy."

That he held power within his grasp was exemplified by the unexpected success scored by the Iron Guard, under its new title, at the general elections of November, 1937. By virtue of that success and by reason of the complicated electoral system in Roumania Codreanu was within measurable distance, at least, of being summoned to form a government. The Iron Guard success was hailed, in Germany, as a triumph for the Nazi cause. Hitler believed that the first gun emplacement had been placed in position for the eventual conquest of the Balkans, preparatory to the drive further East, where lay the greatest prize of all, the British Empire. Codreanu's success (though he gained only second place in the elections, this was really a victory for him) was, in fact, a challenge to the authority of the King, and the Iron Guard leader himself so interpreted it. The Jews of Roumania were anxious and feared the worst. Codreanu had made no bones about the fate he had in store for them. His policy on the Roumanian Jewish question was "complete and absolute elimination of the Jews, by peaceful means, if possible, by any means, if necessary."

The Western democracies watched the new Roumanian situation with much disquiet and their gaze rested on King Carol, who thus acquired a new and central rôle in the European scene. It was at this stage that he achieved the final success, as he estimated it, in killing the "royal philanderer" legend. He received his eagerly sought invitation from the British Court to pay the State Visit to London. It was fixed for March, 1938. In the light of the startling political development in Roumania, this invitation assumed a significance and importance far outweighing its original intention. It was accepted with unconcealed delight by King Carol and, in the cordiality with which it was received in Bucharest, there was a belief that it connoted the beginning of understanding, in Whitehall, of the importance of Roumania in face of the now obvious Nazi threat to the peace and stability of Europe. The previous years had revealed, in the austere chambers of the British Foreign

¹ "At Codreanu's trial in 1938—it was disclosed at a secret session—that the German Legation in Bucharest had advanced Codreanu in one sum alone 40,000,000 lei. This would be approximately £40,000."—Vernon Mackenzie: *Here Lies Goebbels*.

Office, precious little interest in, and far less understanding of the problems of Roumania and of the part played in the country by King Carol. Indeed, the traditional quasi-religious atmosphere of Britain's diplomatic holy of holies was always heavily clouded by the puritanical distaste with which Carol's private life was regarded.

Then there was the "black mark" against him in his dossier, as it were, in the Foreign Office archives, relating to the Godstone-Roumania flight episode of 1928 and its "love and champagne" Paris background. For a long time, there remained in the Foreign Office a "we-regret-we-cannot-forget" attitude with regard to Carol, and this, in large measure, prevented the British public from obtaining any appreciable understanding of the real meaning of Roumania in Europe. In this, of course, the "royal lover" press played its notable part.

Together, these obstacles stood in the way of closer relations, particularly on the economic side, between Britain and Roumania. They severely strained Carol's inherent affection for the country of his maternal ancestry. It is eloquent testimony to the strength of his character that, despite the provocation of the British attitude towards him, and notwithstanding the many rebuffs he had received at the hands of Britain's "highest quarters", he did not waver in his regard for the country whose "unco guid" lawyer-churchman Home Secretary had expelled him ignominiously; nor did he change in his policy of close and friendly relations with Great Britain.

Now, however, that things were happening in Europe and in view of the sinister developments in and from Nazi Germany, British officialdom began to relax a little in its attitude to Carol and to take a little notice of Roumania. The State Visit invitation was the most obvious indication of the change in the British attitude, but there were also more subtle manifestations of it. The British press, though always reluctant to drop the "royal lover-Lupescu" story, suddenly began to notice Carol in the more serious atmosphere of European affairs. The popular press even discovered that the King of Roumania was a shrewd, able and energetic statesman and the most vital and important figure in his country. Carol, always a warm-hearted man, responded quickly and gave clear indication that he was prepared "to let bygones be bygones".

The change in the British attitude to Carol coincided with the startling electoral success of the Fascist Iron Guard. This was clearly the most difficult problem Carol had ever had to face. So long as the manœuvrings of Roumania's politicians were a matter of purely internal affairs, Carol could be expected, in the normal course of things, to deal promptly and effectively with a disturbing faction. He had done it often enough before and had exhibited considerable astuteness in putting recalcitrant politicians in their places. But here, at the end of 1937, there were complications. The Iron Guard was now not merely a local organisation with extreme ideas

of internal reform. It was an openly Fascist body; it had accepted, quite frankly, Nazi ideology; and there were no doubts anywhere that it was the vanguard of Nazi penetration into the Balkans. Codreanu's success bore the implication of "foreign influences", the source of which was, of course, not mentioned publicly in Roumania. This was the era of "appeasement" and it was considered dangerous to offend the Fascist dictators, especially the Nazi, by telling the truth about their plottings and burrowings under the surface of Europe.

European statesmen asked, what will Carol do in this delicate and complicated situation? He soon gave a remarkable answer which made the Western democracies gasp, and roused howls of delight in Nazi Berlin and Fascist Rome and, it should be added, outbursts of anger in Soviet Moscow. He summoned to the Royal Palace in Bucharest, not the Iron Guardist, but the elderly, Germanophile Fascist poet-politician Octavian Goga, almost unknown outside Roumania. By no subtlety of the complicated Roumanian electoral system could Carol's selection of this man for the Premiership be justified. It was quite blatantly the personal selection of the King, in defiance of law and precedent. He side-tracked and patently snubbed the triumphant Fascist Iron Guard. Had it rested at that, no one, except the Fascist states, would have troubled to take notice of this local, though piquant, situation. But all Europe and beyond did take notice, because Octavian Goga was a declared disciple and worshipper of the brown-shirted "Messiah" of Nazi Germany.

Goga did not merely worship Hitler from afar. He had made frequent pilgrimages to Nazi Germany and had established close relations with the Fuehrer himself, with Goebbels and Goering. On his return to Roumania from his last visit to Berlin, during the summer of 1937, he declared that it was an urgent necessity for Roumania to negotiate a close alliance with Germany. He said he had been given assurances that Germany would not support Hungary's claims against Roumania for the restoration of her former territories. He had become a Jew-hater whose anti-semitism was a mania exceeded in violence only by that of Codreanu. He had cultivated Jew hatred, less as a genuine creed than as a measure of his enthusiasm for Hitler's general philosophies; but Goga's anti-semitism was none the less violent. The first and chief item in his political programme which he intended to put into immediate effect was, he told me a few weeks after his nomination to the Premiership, "to eliminate 500,000 Jews from Roumanian life and citizenship and to expatriate them. My first measure will be to declare that we cannot take responsibility for retaining this people in our State life."

As if to emphasise the prime importance of this aspect of his work, and as if to assure his friends and tutors in Nazi Germany that,

like them, he regarded Jew-baiting as the surest way to popular favour and political success, he nominated as his chief lieutenant in the Government the aged Professor Alexander Cuza of Jassy, most rabid of Jew baiters. The Minister of War in this strange Government was General Ion Antonescu.

There was little to choose between Goga's National Christian Party and Codreanu's Iron Guard. Both were avowedly Fascist and under Nazi domination and financial control. Both were rabidly nationalist, on the Fascist model, and both were insanely anti-semitic. Both conceived themselves as inspired by religious zeal. Yet, between them there was acute hostility. On the part of Codreanu this was based on contempt for the little old dilettante politician-scribe whom the Iron Guard leader regarded as an ineffectual and purposeless dreamer, a nuisance, and an obstacle to his own ambition to lead Roumanian Fascism to victory and power. Above all, Codreanu detested Goga for his fawning acceptance of office without authority and for his slavish professions of loyalty to Carol. Between "Capitanul" Codreanu and the King the feud was deep. The megalomaniac Iron Guardist already saw himself as Carol's rival and there was a very thin line between his vague assertions that he had no designs against the Monarchy, as an institution, and his treasonable hostility to the King's person.

The democracies were puzzled by and suspicious of the curious Fascist Government of Octavian Goga. Their fears that Carol had succumbed to Fascist influence, and had put Roumania within reach of the Rome-Berlin "Axis" were justified by Goga's declaration that Roumania recognised Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia, followed by an Italian communiqué issued in Rome, that the new Roumanian Minister there would be accredited to "The King of Italy and Emperor of Abyssinia." That Britain and France believed Carol had assimilated Nazi doctrines, with anti-semitism as the first example of his conversion, was illustrated by sharp reminders from London and Paris of Roumania's treaty obligations guaranteeing freedom and equality to her national minorities. From London there came a positive demonstration of Britain's disapproval. A message from Mr. Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, to Micescu, the Roumanian Foreign Minister, stated that, in the new circumstances, Britain could not receive Carol as she would otherwise like to do.

Carol's purposes certainly appeared obscure, at the time, but, as events showed, there were three well-defined objects behind the political jugglery in Bucharest. First, the expression and continuance of his own authority, the policy he had always pursued with determination. That was indicated by his sweeping aside all the parties having claims to power and his personal choice of a government without any claim to popular backing. Second, the determination to brook no rivalry and the decision to attempt, at least,

to crush the dangerously growing power of a violently nationalist group which might challenge his authority. This was shown by his pointed elimination of the Iron Guard. Third, an effort to ward off the danger of Nazi-Fascist encroachment by an act of "appeasement" of the dictators. This he substantiated by nominating the Fascist Goga as Premier, and by agreeing to recognise Italian Abyssinia.

But there were more subtle motives which actuated Carol. He sought to split and thereby to weaken the Fascist-inclined elements in the country. He sought, by calling to power the "Christian" section of the Roumanian Fascist movement, to rally to his side the religious parties which, while willing to accept the political dogmas of the Nazi and Fascist countries, might fight shy of their paganism.

Some of Carol's most intimate friends and counsellors declared that they had good reason for thinking that he had a reason even more shrewd for imposing a Fascist Government. He proposed to show to the Roumanian people and to the nations abroad that Fascism, by contrast with an authoritarian monarchy, meant, in practice, tyranny and upheaval of the placid Roumanian way of life, and was unworkable as a practical political régime. There would follow, he believed, a revulsion of popular feeling which would pave the way for a re-assertion of the authority and prestige of the monarchy and of the King's own dominance. If that, truly, were Carol's purpose, it was clever, even cunning, though dangerous.

Goga announced plans for a "corporate" state on Italian-Fascist lines and proposed changes in the Constitution providing for a new system of controlled elections, with a smaller Parliament and a "Corporative" Senate. He put into force decrees eliminating the Jews from certain trade and financial activities and "purging" them from the professions, particularly the practice of the law. Within a few weeks there was economic chaos in Roumania. Roumanian funds fell heavily on the foreign bourses. The Jews, in panic, withdrew their deposits from the banks and threw their businesses on the market for sale; many prepared to emigrate with their capital. Roumanian commerce reached a state almost of standstill. Abroad, Roumanian prestige, political and economic, dropped ominously in consequence of the suspicion and chaos which the egregious Goga, impatient to prove his Fascist ardour, had produced.

Within a few weeks the Fascist farce was ended. Carol curtly and contemptuously dismissed Octavian Goga and his whole Government. The baffled and infuriated old gentleman—a loyal disciple of Fuehrer Hitler, to the last—shouted, when, as a dismissed and discredited Premier, he left the presence of the King: "Israel has triumphed." A few months later, in obscurity in his Transylvanian home at Ciucea, he died—forgotten.

By overthrowing Goga as suddenly as he had made him Premier, Carol vindicated and reaffirmed his repute as a strong ruler and as undisputed master of his realm. He proved, also, that he was a man of his word. He kept to his avowal, in my interview with him, that he had not adopted any foreign ideologies when he summoned Goga to power and that his government did not, necessarily, denote a change towards anti-democracy in his (the King's) conduct of Roumanian policies, either at home or abroad. He was true to his words: "I am master of my country. It is my government. When I am dissatisfied with its conduct of affairs, I shall require a change."

When Carol's dramatic foreclosure on Fascism in Roumania became known, there was fury in the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin. There was infinite relief in the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. There was satisfaction in Whitehall in London. The invitation for the King's State Visit to London was renewed and the preparations for it, halted by the advent of the unfortunate Goga Government, were hurried forward.

Within a month of Goga's dismissal Carol acted, swiftly and resolutely, to fulfil his determination to crush Roumanian Fascism and to show both the totalitarian and the democratic states in what direction his real sympathies and policies lay. He proclaimed a quasi-military dictatorship, under his leadership, decreed martial law, and summoned a Government of "National Union" with the Roumanian Primate, the Patriarch Miron Christea, as Premier. He suspended the Constitution and ordered the surrender of all private stores of arms. He nominated an all-Party Cabinet consisting of members representing the Church, the Army, non-Fascist Right Wing politicians and, while eliminating Maniu, secured the adherence of men of his party and of the Liberals. In this way he lined up a powerful opposition to the Iron Guard and Codreanu. The real power in that government was, of course, the King himself. Again, it was "my government". Codreanu retired to his mountain retreat at Predeal to cogitate on this further rebuff and to plot with Berlin for revenge and for the eventual *coup d'état*.

But Carol was active and well informed about the comings and goings between Berlin and Predeal and, with the strong backing of the new government, reinforced by the support of the Church through the Primate Premier, he resolved to strike quickly and to deal a knock-out blow to the Iron Guard. Ten days after the formation of the Government of National Union he promulgated a decree declaring the Iron Guard an illegal organisation. At the same time he massed strong military forces in the strategic centres and along the frontiers. He commanded the disbanding of the entire Iron Guard organisation, under pain of severe penalties. Codreanu surrendered. "Capitanul", with whom I had established a close contact in Bucharest, told me, when I telephoned him from London:

"I have disbanded my entire organisation because I did not want to plunge my country into civil war. I could have resisted by force, but that would have meant bloodshed in Roumania. Politically I am finished, for some time at any rate." He said that he had ordered all his adherents to return to their homes and to take no part in political affairs, adding significantly, "until they receive further orders from me". I recall a distinct note of menace in his tone as he uttered these words. Carol made the grave error of allowing Codreanu to remain at liberty, though under surveillance.

In March, 1938, Hitler ordered the seizure of Austria and gave Europe its first glimpse of his "Panzer" tanks as they rumbled through the Austrian countryside and thundered over the cobblestones of the Vienna "Ring". Hardly was the rape of Austria completed than, unabashed by the "disapproval" of Britain and France, the Fuehrer opened the "war of nerves" against Czechoslovakia. The tempo of the Nazi onslaught increased steadily and moved rapidly to its climax of fabricated fury. There were "incidents" on the Czech-German frontier, discovered by Goebbels' propaganda machine and fed to the fire-spitting and maddened Fuehrer. His patience was rapidly "becoming exhausted". He massed his armoured legions on the frontiers and assembled his bombers at the nearest aerodromes ready "to come to the rescue of the poor, persecuted, oppressed Sudeten Germans" yearning to be brought within the thrall of the Third Realm.

September brought Munich. The Nazi vulture was "appeased". He held a fine slice of Czechoslovakia in his talons. It so happened that with the "liberated" Sudeten Germans, the Fuehrer took under his wing the Skoda works at Pilsen, the largest armaments works in the world. But Mr. Chamberlain returned to London with triumph in his smile and "peace in our time" in his pocket. Edouard Benes, in the Hradcany Palace, the old home of the Bohemian kings on the hill overlooking Prague, did not share the triumph of Mr. Chamberlain. Benes was still President of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, but he now led a truncated state whose defences his friends had handed over, as the reward of blackmail, to his arch-enemy, the gangster chief who had sworn to "get him".

Carol in Bucharest watched these proceedings with concern, and with a deep appreciation of their implications. It is worth noting that there had always been a close understanding between the Roumanian monarch and the President of Czechoslovakia. Each had a high regard for the qualities of the other, and there were frequent exchanges of views between them. When I visited President Benes at the Hradcany Palace, in January, 1938, I was interested to note that the only photograph in his large, white-and-gold room was an autographed portrait of King Carol placed prominently at the side of the President's table. When we discussed the European

situation in the light of the growing strength of Nazi Germany and the menacing arrogance that grew with it, Benes said: "There is only one way to meet and beat the Dictators and that is by strength and firmness. That is the only language they understand. If the Western Democracies are strong, there will be peace. If they show a weak front, there will be war. If France and Britain will stand by me, I am prepared to resist Nazi Germany; if they do not, how do they expect a small nation like ours to stand alone? I am certain Hitler means to provoke a European war, as soon as he is fully ready. He will attack Czechoslovakia first. Then he will go against the other small states in turn. If we can keep together and if we can be sure of the strong support of Britain and France, all will be well. If not, we are lost. At any rate, it is imperative that we build up our strength, as my country is doing, and that the great democracies should do likewise. I hope the Western Powers realise this."

It is certain that Benes conveyed these views to King Carol who not only took them to heart but decided to carry them into effect, so far as Roumania was concerned. They were the motives which dictated his strong action in Roumania during the following months. He was encouraged by Benes' views to take the decision that dictatorship, with intentions of aggression abroad, could only be met by building up strength in his own country, by strong authoritarian rule and by ruthless suppression of potential traitors. That was the true meaning of the drastic changes which Carol subsequently effected in the conduct of the Roumanian State and which misguided and misunderstanding "authorities" in the democracies wrongly interpreted as his own special form of Fascism.

Within a few weeks of Hitler's seizure of Austria, Carol gave further proof of his quality as a strong ruler and of his determination to quell and eliminate Fascist treason in his state. He exercised all the force of authoritarian rule on the discovery that Codreanu, emboldened by the demonstration of his Nazi patron's success in defying the democracies, was renewing his activities by reorganizing his forces which Carol had driven underground by his decree of February, outlawing the Iron Guard. There was evidence that "Capitanul" was plotting something in the nature of a *putsch* or, at least, an outbreak of disorder on a wide national scale. Carol's "Government of National Union" acted promptly. Codreanu, with hundreds of his more prominent followers throughout the country, was arrested and imprisoned; hundreds fled to Germany. The Iron Guard, once again, was dealt a heavy blow, but its attempt at resurgence was an ominous demonstration that rebellious elements in Roumania were stronger and more deeply entrenched than the Government had previously believed. It was more ominous still that the evidence showed clearly how strong was Nazi Germany's sponsorship and backing of the Iron Guard.

It was his realization of the vital and immediate necessity of re-organizing Roumania's internal security and of reconstructing her defences against Hitler's inevitable "drive to the East" that impelled Carol to let it be known in London that he was anxious to hasten the preparations for his State Visit to the British Court. London responded by appointing November 15 as the date of King Carol's arrival in Britain.

CHAPTER VII

LONDON SOMERSAULT

THE PROJECTED STATE Visit to the British Court was regarded by Carol as a political event of the first importance. It had for him, too, a purely personal side and, in this respect, he considered the final invitation and acceptance, with the date appointed and preparations actually in hand, as the happy climax of and, in a sense, the reward for his eight difficult years of kingship. He had not had a Coronation and such State Visits as he had made to foreign countries had been confined to his smaller neighbours in Central and Eastern Europe. He had never paid an official, political visit, as King of Roumania, to the ruling Head of a Great Power. This was one of the facets of his disappointment at not being taken seriously by his fellow rulers. Now that he was to visit, officially, the Sovereigns of the Greatest Power, he was exuberantly, boyishly delighted. But he had misgivings, too.

King Carol was profoundly concerned and anxious lest the British people might, once again, be given a false picture of him. It was not merely a question of his making a good or a bad impression; he was deeply sensitive lest the scribes who had the duty of moulding public opinion should revive the falsities about his early life that had caused him so much pain in the past and had distorted the picture of his real personality. He had the hope that the seriousness of the times and a better understanding of himself would act as a deterrent to reckless and sensation-producing pens. He feared, too, that if the scribes were again to run wild, the political consequences of his visit to London might be so affected as to cause a dislocation of the international policies he had in mind—a working arrangement for closer relations between Britain and Roumania in the democratic front against Hitler. He had his misgivings, however, when he reflected on the disastrous incidents associated with his previous visits to Britain as Prince and King on occasions of less importance.

The coming State Visit in November, 1938, was the fifth of Carol's journeys to Britain. The first was his mission, when still Crown

Prince of Roumania, as envoy of the Roumanian Court at the funeral of Queen Alexandra, in 1925. That was the heyday of his "philandering and champagne" reputation and the first chapter of the hackneyed but always fresh story of the "royal rascalion". That visit was not a happy memory for Carol.

Then followed the disastrous fiasco of the Godstone episode, in 1928, when he was an exile in deep disgrace at home and abroad. He left England like an extradited criminal or an undesirable alien, with an escort of Scotland Yard detectives. That, too, was not a pleasant recollection.

King Carol came to London again, in 1935, to attend the funeral of King George V. This was a most generous gesture because he had been no favourite of the British monarch who not only accepted all the current tales of the Roumanian's escapades but was bluntly outspoken in his criticism of him. It has been recorded that George V had referred to Carol as "that bounder" and was never at any pains to disguise his dislike of him. The attitude of George V towards Carol was believed to be one of the major factors which stood in the way of an official visit to London by the Roumanian King. In short, during the reign of King George V, Carol was by no means *persona grata* at the British Court.

While Carol was deeply distressed by this attitude on the part of his older British cousin, he bore no ill will. On the contrary, he did much to foster and encourage in Roumania a high regard for the British Court and he never failed to pay his tribute of respect and admiration, when the occasion arose. Indeed, it was Carol who helped to create an affection for George V, who was known, in Roumania, as "the Soldier King". When the British Monarch died, Carol considered it a high duty and a matter of deep respect that he should pay his tribute to him, on behalf of the Roumanian people, by his personal presence at the funeral.

He had his first shock, on arrival in London, to find that he was not being paid the respect and consideration due to the reigning sovereign of a foreign state. As a monarch, as well as a family relation, he had expected to be lodged, with appropriate state, at Buckingham Palace. Such residence was in accordance with normal procedure and etiquette in the case of a visiting Head of a State on an official occasion. Carol was incensed to find that, instead of being housed with the British Court, he had been paid the indignity of being given a suite in the London house of a high official of the Court. He was not only resentful of what he regarded as an affront as much to his country as to himself; he was infuriated. He demonstrated his sense of indignity and indignation by refusing to take meals or to have more than the most distant and formal contacts with his "hosts". They, in turn, were indignant at their royal guest's cold aloofness and "discourtesy".

It was a bad beginning of Carol's visit and unfortunate conse-

quences flowed from it. Tongues started to wag. Carol was rarely seen during the days before the royal funeral and reports began to gain circulation that he was not being seen in public because he was indulging in continuous and excessive drinking in the privacy of his suite, in the company of "cronies". The reports spread, were elaborated and embellished. In luscious colouring, London "society" told stories of Carol's secret drinking orgies and these were related with gusto or disgust, according to taste.

In general, "the drunken Carol" in London during a time of solemnity and national grief, was held to be a revolting manifestation of his notoriously bad reputation. There were, of course, reminiscent recapitulations of his past life, his amours in Bucharest, "love and champagne" in Paris and the Riviera and the "Titian-haired Jewess Lupescu".

London was well primed, therefore, to expect further grist to the scandal mill and there was much delving into his movements and activities for piquant details of his misbehaviour. The scandal-mongers had not long to wait for the *pièce de résistance*. It came from America, related to a New York magazine, well known and widely circulated in Britain, by a correspondent in London. It was a delicious story, the best that had ever been told to illustrate the degeneracy of the Roumanian "royal rapsallion".

In brief, the story was that, on the night before the royal funeral, Carol had been indulging in a steady bout of drinking, constant and excessive, even for him. The alcoholic orgy had gone on continuously, the story ran, into the early hours of the morning. When the hour of the royal funeral approached, Carol, the story continued, was so incapable that he had to be assisted by the desperate efforts of his masseur to gain some form of sobriety, so that he might be able to take his place in the funeral procession. In the haste of this last minute "treatment" and in the confusion of the preparations for the procession to move off, the masseur became mixed up with the invited dignitaries and found himself obliged to walk in the procession, still in his masseur's dress.

Naturally, the story gained world-wide currency. In the United States, it became "the story of the century" and created universal delight. In Great Britain, it created horror and indignation and Carol's stock fell to its lowest. He was not spared the bitterest criticism for his abuse of British hospitality and for his insult to the British Court and people on the most solemn occasion of the obsequies of a well-loved King.

The story was fully investigated by a famous American journalist, Mr. Vernon Mackenzie, Dean of the School of Journalism at the University of the State of Washington, in Seattle, one of the foremost institutions of its kind in America. Mr. Mackenzie came to London, specially for his investigation and, in his report, quoted

the terms of the original story as it appeared in a London newspaper of small circulation:

"It appears that King Carol of Roumania, who does not often get among the lights of London, and is not a one to let the lights go by without a good look, woke up on the morning of the funeral not too well. . . .

"Resourceful attachés, thinking and working fast, succeeded in securing the services of an able and energetic masseur, a gentleman, we understand, of Roumanian origin. The masseur worked hard on the King, and approximately at the last minute it was found possible to get the King dressed and into a car. Thinking that a last minute work-out might do good, the masseur accompanied the King in the car. . . . The masseur, bewildered by the marching troops and the columns of soldiers and police on every side, lost his head, and thinking escape impossible, lined up with the lesser diplomats . . . in ordinary civilian clothes hastily put on over his masseur's dress, and an ordinary felt hat on his head. . . ."

Continuing his report, Mr. Mackenzie wrote:

"This was too good a story for the American papers to miss. The *International News Service* London office first got wind of the yarn and cabled it to the United States. . . . The *Associated Press* followed two or three days later on 1st February . . . and said that the popular London morning papers had identified the mysterious figure in the procession variously as 'an unknown diplomat, a Roumanian soldier, and a masseur'. The *Associated Press* radioed to the United States a photograph ostensibly showing Carol and his 'masseur' together in the procession. In British news reel theatres a few hours later millions of newspaper readers who had chortled over the bizarre yarn, gaped at the apparent visual evidence in the funeral pictures, and King Carol came in for general booing.

"The American public swallowed the story, hook, line and sinker. From the Atlantic to the Pacific millions must have been amused by the affair. *Time* magazine picked up the I.N.S. despatch, embellished it ingeniously, and put it on the radio in *March of Time*. Time marches on! And so, presumably, although not too steadily, marched Carol and a 'Mr. Stoebs'.

"Mr. Mackenzie proceeded to bring the quaint comedy to its truthful anti-climax:

"*March of Time* thought it too good a story to miss, or perhaps information reached the radio station too late to stop the

broadcast. What a story, to confirm America's democratic belief in its conception of royalty!

"In the photographs and in the news-reel Carol and 'Stoebs' apparently were marching within a few feet of each other separated by an officer in Captain's uniform. The facts are that Carol was marching in a forward part of the procession nearly half a mile away from 'Stoebs'.

"The alleged masseur was (and is) in reality Roumania's number one hero, Constantin Cotolan. He might be called the Sergeant Yorke of Roumania. He was sent to London with the Roumanian army delegation to represent the peasant-soldiers of his country. He holds the award 'Order of Michael the Brave', equivalent to the Congressional Medal or the Victoria Cross.

"The photographs published, both real and doctored, showed the shirt outside the trousers, projecting a few inches below the coat. This shirt-tail was said by the newspapers to be a 'masseur's apron'. They were misled. Except for the hat it is the Sunday formal costume of peasants in the Roumanian district of Muscel, Transylvania, from which Colotan comes. He is a country school teacher, speaks and reads no English, and when I visited Muscel this summer I learned how perplexed and distressed he was when he got back to Roumania and was informed what capital had been made out of his English hard hat and Roumanian shirt-tail!

"... The first intimation Cotolan had of his 'masseur' rôle was when he received a cable from an American lecture bureau, offering him several thousand dollars to tour the United States. He was told that he would be expected to appear on the platform with masseur's apron prominently displayed; and that he would naturally be able to tell many yarns about helping Carol's sober up after a wild night!

"A few days later he received a letter from a New York lawyer who asked for his power of attorney and promised to make him rich by suing American papers for libel. He declined to make capital out of the hoax. As he has a keen sense of humour he would have hugely enjoyed the whole affair, if it had not been for the light in which it placed King Carol.

"By the gate, as his visitor turned to leave, Cotolan called out a parting comment. Through my interpreter I learned that he was saying: 'Such an idea to make me rich through a libel suit. I do not want to be rich. I am satisfied with what I have. If you see the lawyer in New York tell him I am just building a fine house, and with money I have honestly earned.'

"It must be admitted that regular Press photographs of the procession readily lead to mild wonder about the "queerly-dressed' man. All the others round him are wearing military uniforms. The London *Morning Post* published a picture of

the Roumanian group captioned 'diplomats in yesterday's funeral procession' and also gave the order of the procession."

Here follows, in Mr. Mackenzie's narrative, the order of the procession beginning with the "Gun Carriage with remains of His late Majesty George V", followed by the king (Edward VIII), his brothers, two high officials of the Court, the nearest male relatives of the dead King, then the President of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of Denmark and Iceland, and His Majesty the King of Roumania. Then came 334 British and foreign dignitaries and their suites, ahead of the Roumanian delegation, which is listed as including:

Monsieur E. Urdareanu.

Colonel F. Zwiedeneck.

Captain Fundatzianu.

Major M. Mihailescu.

Colonel Palangeanu.

Lt.-Colonel Trenescu (in same uniform as Carol).

Monsieur Golovan (Constantin Cotolan, alias 'Stoebs').

Major General S. S. Butler.

"'Golovan' is a misreading of the Roumanian name 'Cotolan'. Second from Cotolan marched Colonel Trenescu—wearing a helmet identical with those worn by Carol. Caption writers, in most cases innocently, called the figure of Trenescu, 'King Carol'.

"Roumanian officials, especially of the United States, where the 'story' got the 'biggest play', were furious, and their efforts to right things illustrate how corrections never completely, often not even faintly, caught up with the original version. The Roumanian Minister in Washington, choleric with rage, called at the State Department to protest. He was given the customary answer: 'The liberty of the American Press cannot be infringed upon. We haven't the slightest control over the newspapers.'

"It was suggested that the Minister arrange for a denial and correction to be cabled from London. This was attempted, but all London cabled was, in effect, 'Why bother to deny such a preposterous lie?'

"Probably the most furious Roumanian in the United States, at this time, was the Roumanian Consul-General in San Francisco, Dimitri Dimancescu. He had both a national and personal interest in the fake. He had been engaged intimately with Carol some twenty years ago in the Boy Scout activities. He and Carol started Baden-Powell's movement in Roumania. In addition, it happened that Dimancescu had a summer house in the Muscel district, knew Cotolan, and recognised imme-

diately why he had been sent to London and that his costume was the dress of the district.

"Dimancescu, who is now counsellor in the Roumanian Legation in London, managed to get corrections published in several Californian papers, including the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the Hearst papers. The latter group put a correction on the air one Sunday evening. Mrs. Dimancescu sent a letter of protest to *Time*, enclosing an amusing letter which she had received from Cotolan. *Time* regretted the original error and apologised."¹

That episode caused Carol much pain and created much resentment in Roumania. Yet he could not altogether stifle his affection for Britain, and, two years afterwards, he evinced a certain "nostalgia" for London. When he announced his intention to pay a visit to London "incognito", his entourage, while unable to deter him from making the journey, suggested that he was inviting another spate of harmful publicity. Carol, who was anxious to do some quiet "shopping" in London, to visit the art galleries and see a few theatrical productions, was of the opinion that the British Press would respect his privacy. In the result, the London popular Press did not respect his desire for privacy but the visit marked the turning point of British public opinion—in his favour; indeed, it veered round from belief in his degeneracy and irresponsibility to an appreciation of his truer and better qualities of character and ability.

Carol arrived in London in the summer of 1937 as "Count Vrancea", with Ernest Urdareanu, Ely Radu, his Equerry, and Dimancescu, who acted as his secretary. He did, at first, create a certain amount of dissatisfaction in official circles because he chose to stay at an hotel not then patronised by reigning royalty. The popular newspapers pounced upon him immediately, delighted at the opportunity of peeping, once again, into the private life of the colourful King of Roumania with the exciting record of "love, champagne and adventure".

No sooner was Carol installed in his suite than a host of reporters descended on the hotel. Many of these scribes were of an unusual type—smartly dressed, young and good-looking girls, who, in the words of one of Carol's entourage, "looked more like Greta Garbos than journalists". For days, the reporters, genuine and otherwise, roamed the hotel public rooms, trying to adopt the appearance of guests; they stalked the "Count" and noted every possible detail of his activities and interests. Many essayed to interview him. One, by an accident in which he, innocently, was mistaken for the tailor who had come to measure the King for some new suits, succeeded in penetrating to his bedroom but was discovered quickly.

¹ Vernon Mackenzie: *Through Turbulent Years*.

The journalistic sleuths were disappointed with the lack of material out of which to produce the expected "good story". Carol spent seven days in London. The reporters found him spending time in Savile Row with his tailors buying new suits and uniforms. They followed him to one of the large stores in the West End where he bought a large stock of gramophone records, chiefly of the "Masters". They were interested, and in some cases, almost touched by his assiduity in purchasing presents, mainly wearing apparel for his son. They were surprised, in that connection, by the strangeness of Carol's taste; he bought clothing of loud colouring in the belief that this would make the Crown Prince look like an Oxford undergraduate. They "shadowed" Carol in the art galleries and heard him make intelligent, even expert comments on the paintings. They saw him at theatres where he saw popular successes, mostly of the lighter character; he even visited a suburban theatre where he heard, at a matinée performance, Richard Tauber and Evelyn Laye sing and where he was recognised and applauded by the audience. They observed that he spent a good deal of time in the antique shops buying presents and jade of which he was a great collector.

How much the Press of London changed with regard to Carol was evidenced by the fact that they carried few reports of his movements; what the newspapers did publish was, generally, approving description of his activities, the serious nature of which wrought something like a transformation in the public estimate of the Roumanian King. So far did the discretion of the Press go that it failed to give prominence to two highly significant episodes.

Carol was unfeignedly delighted to receive, after he had been in London a few days, an invitation to lunch with the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace. His pleasure was all the greater having regard to the unfortunate events that had occurred at his previous visit to attend the funeral of King George V. He was particularly touched by an invitation, at the same time, to pay a visit to Queen Mary at Marlborough House. A member of Carol's suite has related that the Roumanian King "felt that he might be imposing an ordeal on his British royal hosts".

At Buckingham Palace lunch lasted just under two and a half hours, a considerable time longer than that scheduled in the programme. When he emerged Carol was observed to be in his most happy mood. Still, he evinced a certain nervousness when he was due to present himself at Marlborough House, where, it was generally believed, his reputation and private life could not possibly have been approved. The visit to Queen Mary was to have been only of the briefest duration, and his entourage expected to rejoin the King after a very few minutes. In fact, the meeting between Carol and the Queen lasted for an hour and a quarter, and when he left Marlborough House the members of his suite were delighted to notice that he was radiantly pleased and smiling happily.

What followed the informal but happy meetings with the British royal family was, politically, of even greater moment. The reporters were very surprised when the Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, called on "Count Vrancea" at his hotel and remained for an hour. The next day, Carol's chief visitor was Mr. Anthony Eden, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who remained more than an hour, and the day after, the Permanent Head of the Foreign Office, Sir Robert Vansittart (afterwards Lord Vansittart) paid a call lasting two hours.

Mr. Vernon Mackenzie comments that,

"The newspapers published only a perfunctory two or three lines about each of these visits. The consensus of opinion in Whitehall seemed to be that Carol had made an excellent impression on these three statesmen, one of whom told a friend that he found the King 'brilliant, well-informed and disarming'."

During the three interviews with the British statesmen the ground was laid for the State Visit to London of His Majesty King Carol the Second of Roumania. That marked the almost complete reversal of Britain's opinion of him and the end of the "royal rapsallion" legend.

CHAPTER VIII

GLITTER BUT NO GOLD

KING CAROL THE Second of Roumania, accompanied by his son, the Grand Voivod Michael of Alba Julia and an imposing retinue arrived in London on November 15, 1938. That the King regarded the visit as an important political as well as a festive occasion, was demonstrated by the inclusion in his suite of his Foreign Minister, M. Petrescu-Comnen, his Minister of the Royal Household and Lord Great Chamberlain, M. Ernest Urdareanu, and a train of financial and economic experts.

The Roumanian monarch made a resplendent and majestic figure, in his plumed silver helmet and the magnificent white silk cloak swinging from his shoulders to reveal the large crimson Cross of Michael the Brave. His reception by King George VI and the British Government bore every evidence of high cordiality. The citizens of London demonstrated with characteristic friendliness, if not with exuberance, and they showed their delight at the spectacle of the dashing monarch and his handsome son from the distant country of Eastern Europe. Carol was patently charmed with his reception and beamed happily at the warmth of his wel-

come by the King, Government and people of Great Britain. The newspapers competed in almost extravagant praise of the Roumanian King.

It was universally understood and appreciated that Carol's visit meant much more than a glittering pageant of pomp and ceremony, of which there was plenty, to decorate and emphasise the gala occasion of an exchange of international courtesies. Not once did the popular Press refer to the "royal lover". It evinced not the smallest interest in the "Titian-haired Jewess Lupescu"; indeed, to one coming upon the history of King Carol in the newspapers of that time, it would have seemed impossible that any such person could have existed. For the first time the sub-editors in the newspaper offices could safely, and without fear of rebuke, pass for publication a "story" about King Carol in which there was no reference to her. Indeed, the London Press was enthusiastic in its eulogies of the Roumanian King, praising his strength as a ruler, his sagacity as a statesman and his loyalty in his friendship for Great Britain and the cause of democracy now facing the looming menace of Nazi Germany. The *Evening Standard* wrote, on October 20, "he is an Anglophil and the last pillar of Franco-British policy in South-Eastern Europe. In the past, not knowing him, we have treated him badly. To-day, his merits are gradually becoming known to an ever-increasing number of Englishmen. The King's latest admirer is Lord Lloyd, who has returned from his Roumanian trip with the highest opinions of Carol's courage and intelligence." On the day of the King's arrival in London the same newspaper wrote, "King Carol holds among the few remaining crowned heads of Europe a position that is unique. He has succeeded in combining monarchy by inheritance with a personal rule equivalent to semi-dictatorship, and in so doing has served his country adroitly and well. Whatever views may be held of authoritarian government in general, there is no gainsaying the fact that, under the thinly-veiled autocracy established by King Carol, Roumania has been saved from the danger of extremist rule by M. Codreanu's Fascists and rescued equally from the confusion and corruption engendered by Parliamentary factions under the Regency." The other newspapers commented on the royal visitor in like manner; their enthusiasm for Carol was in striking contrast with their attitude to him, three years later, when he was an unhappy exile from his country, a victim of Hitler's strength and democracy's weakness.

Carol arrived in London in the atmosphere of Europe after Munich. There was peace—but there were preparations for war. The position in Central and Eastern Europe was well summarised by one of the more sober and understanding of British newspapers:

"In name, of course, the Little Entente exists, but the life went out of it with the fall of Czechoslovakia before Germany.

Roumania, with no sort of Collective Security system to strengthen her, and with nothing to expect from her old friend France, must now adjust her relations with the Greater Germany and a Hungary whose appetite for the recovery of lost territory, of which Roumania has a considerable share, is immensely whetted by her gains in Slovakia and Ruthenia. No doubt King Carol pleased Herr Hitler when he refused to have anything to do with Colonel Beck's scheme for a common Hungarian-Polish frontier across Ruthenia. But he cannot ignore the fact that the retention of what remains of Ruthenia as part of Czechoslovakia gives Germany a gateway not only to the Ukraine, but to Roumania where there are more Ukrainians—and the foodstuffs and raw materials Germany needs.”¹

Carol fully understood all this but he was not quite sure whether the British Government fully appreciated his position in the context of the larger European battleground which Nazi Germany was giving unmistakable signs of preparing. He hoped, too, that London and Paris realised the significance of Hitler's cautious but persistent, and, of course, “peaceful”, creepings towards the Roumanian frontier. Within a few days of the signing of the Munich Pact assuring the “peace in our time” which so delighted Mr. Neville Chamberlain and lulled the British people into a false sense of security, by a simple readjustment of the map of Europe at the cost of small Czechoslovakia, German “carpet-baggers” trooped into Bucharest in search of “good business” for Germany. Leader of the “missionaries” was the Herr Doktor Karl Clodius, chief Nazi trade negotiator and expert in securing commercial agreements with weaker states with good produce useful to Germany in the event of war, agreements plentifully sprinkled with “concessions” rarely unfavourable and, indeed, always advantageous to Germany.

Unlike the commercial envoys of the democracies, Herr Doktor Clodius used direct methods in his negotiations for “better trade”. His addresses to prospective “collaborators” were liberally sprinkled with astute allusions to the advantages to be derived from fuller commercial relations between smaller foreign countries and the Great Third Reich. His carefully worded phrases contained fewer references to commerce than pointed statements dealing with the military might of Nazi Germany and her ability to make use of it. The trade maps which, invariably, he brought with him to illustrate his commercial themes, contained little in the way of trade charts but were always clearly marked to show the strategic lines of communication from Germany and how easily armies and armaments could be transported along them.

The same British newspaper, referring to the fact that other Balkan countries had already been brought into the German

¹ *Glasgow Herald.*

economic orbit "on terms that made it difficult for them to resist German political pressure", added shrewdly:

"Roumania, though she must depend on Germany for much of her economic prosperity, still holds out. But it may be difficult for her to resist permanently."

The article concluded:

"No doubt London will do its best to convince him (King Carol) that Britain is far from having lost interest in Roumania's trade or in the prospect of securing to her a peaceful future."

That was Carol's case, exactly. It was precisely because he realised how closely he might be tied, economically, to Germany, with the political consequence of the loss of Roumania's independence, and because he was not so sure that "London would do its best" to assure him of its interest in her future, that Carol had been so anxious to come to Britain, in person.

When he left Bucharest for London, Carol had told his countrymen that he was going on a mission as "the ambassador of my people". Not only was Carol an adroit politician but he knew the meaning of political words, and when he spoke of being an "ambassador", he meant to convey that he had before him a task of supreme delicacy and importance. He had accomplished certain things of considerable moment to his state, setting high his prestige and enhancing his authority, but there could be no doubt that they were displeasing to the Nazi Leader of the "Master Race". Moreover, the Fuehrer was hungry for the riches of Carol's fertile soil and had the sure means to satisfy his appetite. Carol had to proceed warily, therefore, lest he might provoke the Nazi tiger to spring. He was, by no means, in a position to challenge the might of Hitler, should he press Roumania for "concessions"—and there was, already, the painful example of Czechoslovakia, to warn Carol to go cautiously in relation to Germany.

The first announcement, in December 1937, of the invitation to King Carol to pay a State Visit to London had been "noted" in Berlin. The immediate consequence was an intensification of Nazi "interest" in Roumanian trade, accompanied by increased aid to and encouragement of the Iron Guard. There was much anxiety in Bucharest at this development and at the hints from Berlin, not only that the proposed London visit of the King would be a "mistake" on the part of Roumania but that she would fare much better through a royal visit to Germany instead. Some political elements in Roumania advocated that, in these circumstances, Carol's visit to Britain would be a tactical error and would lead to complications with Germany. They held that it would be better to cancel the

engagement or, at least, that it should be only one of a series of visits to the western capitals, to take off "the edge" of an exclusively British visit.

It was suggested that the King should "appease" the Fuehrer by announcing his hope to include Germany in his tour of Western Europe. That view was shared by some of Carol's Ministers. Carol did not, at first, accept this view but when the "suggestions" became more insistent, he felt compelled to take a less positive stand. On one thing he was adamant—he refused categorically to cancel the visit to London. When the journey to London had actually started, Carol, believing he could forestall the consequences of Hitler's further "displeasure", let it be known that he intended, after the London visit, to "call on" the Fuehrer at Berchtesgaden. That was to be the diplomatic "balance" by which the royal "Ambassador" thought he would steer his way through the political shoals. There was, of course, much more in it than an essay in tact. At the same time it was stated, in Bucharest, that King Carol would in all probability make an opportunity to pay a visit to Paris, to the old friends of Roumania, though this visit would be less formal than the State affair in London and less significant than the "call" at Berchtesgaden.

Carol, the shrewd realist, with Benes in mind, came to London to tell the Chamberlain Government that, in the almost certain event of Hitler training his guns on Roumania, his country would stand and resist, provided the frontier defences and the armed forces were brought up to strength and re-equipped with the weapons necessary to meet Hitler's "Panzer Divisions" and the Luftwaffe. That meant money and Roumania had not enough for large-scale re-armament adequate to meet a German aggression. He came to tell the British Government, also, that he could meet the still polite but clearly menacing pressure of the Herr Doktor Clodius only if Roumania could arrange an adequate market for her products which would make her economically independent of Germany.

Between the cheers and the banquetings showered on him profusely in London, Carol asked for financial and economic aid; he was certain that, if argument were needed, the grim facts and warnings of Czechoslovakia would argue eloquently for him. He made it plain that if he were unsuccessful, no other alternative would be left to him but to seek to retain the integrity and independence of Roumania by coming to an arrangement with the Fuehrer. That meant, inevitably, his being trapped in the Berlin-Rome web.

In British political circles outside the Government, at least, Carol's difficult situation and the requirements to aid him to clarify it, were well understood. The more serious British Press were straightforward in their views of the matter. The *Manchester Guardian* wrote, on the eve of his arrival in Britain:

"The fall of Czecho-Slovakia has brought troubles enough to Roumania. She is now fully exposed to German political and economic pressure. By insisting that a strip of Ruthenia should be left independent, Germany has secured a road to her very frontiers—and Roumania's oilfields are the richest and most coveted area in Central Europe. . . . When King Carol arrives in London he will have much to discuss with British Ministers. If he is to continue to resist German pressure he may require British loans or British credits. If he is to preserve the independence of his country he may need diplomatic support. On its side, the British Government must decide whether it is still 'interested' in Central Europe or whether it is ready to abandon what is left to Germany. If we wish to save anything from the wreck it would be wise to consider favourably any proposals King Carol may have to make. Except for Turkey, which is more than half in Asia, Roumania is almost the last truly independent country in South-east Europe."

The position was variously stated elsewhere in the political press but the general conclusions were the same. A factual account of what German pressure meant to Roumania—and to Britain—was given by the *Yorkshire Post*, the morning after Carol was welcomed at the station in London by King George VI:

"For her part, Roumania has so far resisted German blandishments, and is not likely to submit exclusively to the influence of any one country. It is remarkable, however, that Roumania's imports from Germany were valued at 2,580 million lei in 1935 and increased to 4,566 million lei in 1936. German enterprise has been particularly active in Roumania; in order to overcome exchange regulations, which prevented the transfer of blocked lei to Germany, a German firm introduced the soya bean into Roumania and used the blocked lei to finance the scheme, which gave employment to Roumanian farmers and peasants. The whole crop goes to Germany, where it can be used to feed people and cattle as well as in the making of things necessary for war. German ingenuity is remarkable. Whether Britain and France are capable of similar feats may be doubted, but it is clear that the Roumanian market is of considerable importance, and that the promotion of trade should serve the cause of peace."

The emphatic understatement of *The Scotsman* is worth quoting:

"The visit of King Carol and his popular heir, the Crown Prince Michael, will provide occasion for the exchanges of courtesies and compliments which are the good manners of great nations. But if no more concrete and commercial bonds are

cemented between the two countries, King Carol may well return to Roumania with the highest opinion of British goodwill and a less exalted estimate of British good sense."

It is important, also, to recall the comments of a periodical so remote from the political conceptions of King Carol as the *New Statesman and Nation*:

"The State visit to England of King Carol may provide some answer to the question how far the British Government is willing or able to apply checks to the advance of Germany's influence down the Danube. With her important oil fields and wheat lands, Roumania is a tempting prey, and the large Magyar minority in Transylvania renders her vulnerable if Hungary, at Hitler's instance, makes further demands for the 'rectification' of frontiers. Whatever may be said against the system of personal autocracy which he has established, King Carol is beyond doubt a patriot in the sense that he does not desire to see his country reduced to a condition of vassalage to the Reich whose dominance over Roumania's foreign trade is already a political factor. Its effect was illustrated by Roumania's refusal to support the Polish plan, which Germany opposed, for the complete liquidation of Ruthenia and the establishment of a common frontier between Poland and Hungary. King Carol's object in coming to London is manifestly to enquire how far he can count on economic support from Britain as an alternative to complete attachment to the Axis. It would perhaps be too cynical to say that he is putting Roumania up for sale by auction, but he certainly wants to learn whether Britain is prepared to make a bid—in the form of armament credits or larger wheat purchases—to strengthen the one buffer between the *Drang nach Osten* and the Black Sea."

This put in a nutshell the whole case that Carol made in London—his precarious position in relation to Hitler's ambitions and the only method by which he could be extricated from it. He tried hard to impress the British Government that it was vitally necessary, in British interests as well as Roumania's, "to strengthen the one buffer between the *Drang nach Osten* and the Black Sea".

Although, at the time, it was considered impolitic to admit, and, indeed, it was found necessary to repudiate reports, after the King had left London, that he had made any specific proposals of a financial or economic nature, Carol and his advisers did, in fact, make quite definite proposals for collaboration between Britain and Roumania in the financial and trade spheres. He laid before the British Government a plan worked out in detail, whereby Britain should assist Roumania to the extent of a loan

of £20,000,000, partly by way of cash advance, and partly by extended credit in connection with the purchase of war materials from Britain. The cash, Carol proposed, should be applied to the development of Roumania's war industries, and for agricultural industrialisation, as part of a general scheme of economic planning for war. He proposed, with the money advanced by Britain, to carry out an elaborate programme of road building, a vital matter for the new mechanised form of warfare. He intended to apply part of the cash towards building a new naval base on the Black Sea. "Provide me with the means to build up the defences of Roumania against German aggression and as a barrier to the *Drang nach Osten*" was the burden of Carol's financial and trade proposals to Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Sir John Simon (later Lord Simon), Lord Halifax, the Treasury and the Governors of the Bank of England.

The King also produced concrete ideas for economic collaboration with Great Britain, as part of the general defence scheme. He proposed an elaborate system of barter. In effect, the proposal was an economic arrangement whereby Britain would purchase almost all of Roumania's wheat and oil and other production, mainly agricultural, in exchange for British manufactured goods. Under Carol's plan almost the whole of Roumania's oil products and the major part of her wheat, both vital to Britain—as well as to Germany—would have been placed at the disposal of Great Britain. More important—Hitler would have been prevented from obtaining this much coveted wealth of war material.

On the formal state occasions at which all the grandeur and ceremonial magnificence of the British Court and Government was displayed for his reception, King Carol confined his public declarations to courteous but generalised expressions of his pleasure in coming to Britain and of his hopes for closer collaboration between her and his country, "in the interests of peace". He reserved for the City of London ("The City") the more direct and explicit of his ideas regarding that collaboration and the necessities that called for it. When he spoke at the Guildhall, where he was received with the traditional pomp and majesty of the Lord Mayor and Corporation he was quite deliberately aware that he was addressing himself, in reply to the formal greetings of the Lord Mayor of London, to the business men and the financiers who played so decisive a rôle in the foreign policies of Great Britain.

He began his carefully prepared speech, clearly of his own composition, with an almost challenging reference to his ties with Great Britain. "Am I not the great-grandson of the Great Queen Victoria? This is, therefore, the first and one of the strongest ties that bind me to this nation." He reminded his distinguished audience that "neither I nor my people can forget that Roumania

belonged to the same mighty army of the Allies, fighting for the same cause and for the same faith". There was a subtle reference to the new barbarism emanating from Germany: "Established on the ancient boundaries of Western civilisation, Roumania created in the course of centuries, through the bravery of her sons, the first breaker of barbaric invasion. Standing at the mouth of the Danube, Roumania has always been envied by her neighbours, and has had to fight continuously for the national entity of her people."

King Carol spoke eloquently and with a sense of reality when he developed the theme of the inter-relation of economic development—prosperity—with the maintenance of peace, "through a loyal and equitable development of economic exchange" and he made a subtle appeal to the special character of his hearers in adding, "I attach such great importance to the development of these relations, that I do not consider there could be any more useful and reliable ambassadors of peace than the business men". Cautiously, yet clearly, he expressed, in this sentence, the real, political purpose of his mission to Great Britain: "Roumania, I assure you, is ready to adopt such a programme as soon as she can be certain of receiving sufficient collaboration of a real and serious nature."

Carol spent three days in London. No monarch ever worked harder than he. There were festivities, many and lavish, but there were more "business" conferences with the British Government and "The City". The Roumanian King argued, pleaded and elaborated his plans for securing British aid in the event of Hitler's pressure on him becoming heavier. There were many discussions between the experts from Roumania and their British counterparts.

What was the result of his "ambassadorial" visit to London? Carol was delighted by the sincerity and the enthusiasm of his British hosts. Yet, he left London a sad and disappointed man. He was given the fullest assurances of the sympathy and encouragement of the British Government and he was warmly commended, even praised, for his energy and ability in establishing firm rule in his country. He was applauded for his determined zeal in eliminating from his state those elements which were the vanguard of foreign aggressors. He took with him many fine tributes to his statesmanship and many testimonials of his important rôle as leader of a possible Balkan phalanx which could be built up to withstand Hitler when he would launch his "drive to the East". But the only overt evidence that he had to show of the success of his mission to Britain was the beautifully illuminated Address in the magnificent casket presented to him by the Lord Mayor of London, in the name of its citizens. The only British gold that King Carol saw during his visit from which he hoped to bring

aid to his country, was the gold plate at the sumptuous State Banquet in his honour at Buckingham Palace.

He said farewell to Britain and to the Government of Mr. Neville Chamberlain and there were cordial exchanges of good will and good wishes. But Carol left without his hoped-for Anglo-Roumanian Economic Pact. There was no agreement for an interchange of raw materials; there was no scheme for the British purchase of Roumania's oil and wheat, so that Hitler might be "cut out" of the rich fields of production of vital war supplies; there was no plan whereby Roumania might be supplied by Britain with much-needed armaments; there was no financial aid, either by loan or by credit. "The City" did not find Roumania a good enough "business risk" to justify a loan, and that was a fact of supreme importance at the Treasury in Whitehall and in Downing Street which was still, then, the official residence of Mr. Neville Chamberlain.

Four days after King Carol left London, Mr. Chamberlain, in one of his more illuminating statements on foreign affairs, summed up, in the House of Commons, the results of the royal visit: "The conversations between King Carol and the Roumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the one hand, and members of His Majesty's Government, on the other, were naturally confidential, and I can make no detailed statement. I can, however, assure the House that the discussions were of a most frank and friendly character and covered matters of common concern to the two Governments, both in the political and economic fields." Hansard reported that the Prime Minister's statement was greeted with "cheers".

Naturally, Nazi Germany was deeply interested in and concerned with what was going on in London between King Carol and the British Government. Hitler was well aware that there was more than pleasant pageantry in the Roumanian State Visit. He was, probably, adequately informed of the general purport, if not of the precise details of "the conversations between King Carol and the Roumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the one hand, and members of His Majesty's Government, on the other". If Hitler did not know the exact nature of the proposals made by Carol, he knew well enough that they were connected with oil and wheat and credits. The Fuehrer was displeased with the whole affair in London—he did not approve of Carol going there at all. Both before and after the King left Bucharest, Goebbels' propaganda press and radio were hard at work to discredit the State Visit and to create, in Roumania, hostility to it. While the negotiations in London were proceeding, Hitler became busy in Roumania.

Knowing the snail speed with which British statesmanship was wont to make decisions (or not to make them) in matters of high international policy, and aware of the super-cautious methods of the City of London in matters of international finance having a background more of politics than profits, the Fuehrer did not

have much trouble in stealing a march on the British, in the Balkans, and of making the pace for Carol. The Nazi put into operation his favourite twin device for conquest without arms—he consulted with and conspired against his prospective victim, at one and the same time; with one hand he proffered collaboration, with the other he undermined.

Hitler instructed the Herr Doktor Clodius to resume and intensify "negotiations" with Bucharest for more German-Roumanian trade—more oil and wheat for Germany and more cheap toys and aspirin for Roumania. Simultaneously, he took wily advantage of Carol's friendly gesture in announcing that he intended, after the visit to London, to pay a visit to Berchtesgaden, by intensifying his aid to Codreanu and the Iron Guard and by surreptitiously knitting together the threads of this rebellious organisation which, some six months before, Carol had succeeded in disintegrating—or so it seemed, then.

Towards the end of his stay in London and while the cheers of the London populace in the streets and the applause of the guests at the state functions were still ringing in his ears, the news was brought to King Carol that wild disorders were breaking out all over Roumania. As usual, the chief targets of terrorism were the Jews; their synagogues were being defiled and their sacred Scrolls of the Law were being torn and burned; their homes were being attacked and their business premises and shops were being despoiled. Youthful bands of rioters were indulging in the frolics of street demonstrations in the towns and revolver shots were being fired. In their shoutings, the disorderly bands were roaring the customary offensive epithets at the "Jewess Lupescu". Bombs were being thrown and Government buildings were being fired.

The voices that were shouting in the streets of Roumania were the voices of the Iron Guard, but the hands that were burning, despoiling and destroying were the hands of Hitler. The outbreak of unrest was, as Hitler intended it to be, a rather depressing tail-piece to the triumphant parades through the London streets. The resurgence of the Iron Guard, under Nazi auspices, was the well-prepared prelude, as always, to the entry of a prospective, terrorised, prey into the eyrie on the mountain top at Berchtesgaden. Eight months before, there had been a similar situation in Austria, just before Chancellor Schuschnigg was "invited" to meet the Fuehrer for a discussion in his Bavarian stronghold—and lost his country's independence and his own freedom.

Carol issued the usual statement of gratitude for, and pleasure at, the hospitality and welcome he had received in London. As he boarded the boat at Dover, he remarked ruefully, to a member of his entourage: "At least, this time, they did not send Scotland Yard detectives to make sure of my going away."

BERCHTESGADEN—VIA PARIS

ON THE EVE of King Carol's departure from London, *en route* to Germany, there was much depression among his entourage. This was a reflection of his own mood consequent on the entirely negative results of his political work in London. There had been final hopes that the diplomatic and financial powers in Britain could be persuaded, even at the last minute, that Roumania was no longer a remote South-East European state with some internal troubles which were nobody's business but her own.

There had been desperate efforts on the part of the King and his most Anglophile counsellors, whom he had carefully selected to accompany him on his mission, to make Downing Street realise that Roumania was an integral element in Hitler's expansionist plans for the political and economic conquest of Europe and that it was vital, in Britain's own interests, to secure and strengthen her as an outpost of the democratic defence against the aggressions which, in the clear understanding of the most expert observers of the trend of things in Europe, were maturing fast, in the Fuehrer's mind.

The Roumanians, almost desperately, represented to the British Government that their country, no matter how strong her determination to resist any Nazi encroachment on her economic or political independence, could not possibly stand alone, except for the briefest time—that she must go under in face of the armed might of Nazi Germany. It had been pointed out that if the Roumanian oil wells and the abundant wheat crops were not to fall into German hands, Britain must herself take measures to secure them. It was no use. Carol was about to leave empty handed. Both he and his entourage, particularly the experts in foreign affairs and finance, were constrained to "cover up" his failure to achieve a single part of his aims. They had to consider the adverse effects that the failure would have in Roumania, the disappointment of the friends of Britain and the delight of Carol's enemies. They had to think of the gloatings of Nazi Germany and the encouragement that the failure would give Hitler to increase his pressure on Roumania. They thought of the bad effects on British prestige on the Continent and the lack of confidence that would follow among the smaller and still independent states who would, sooner or later, look to the Western democracies for support.

There was only one thing to do and Carol's advisers did it. They gave out that while the King had had general conversations

with the British Government on economic and political questions, there never had been any suggestion for a British loan or credit for Roumania. One member of Carol's suite went so far as to declare, in a written statement: "I am able to state authoritatively that there has never been any question of the Roumanian Government having approached the British Government or the City of London for a loan—as has been wrongly stated from totally misinformed Continental sources. I think I am correct in stating that King Carol's basic idea, as regards Anglo-Roumanian economic relations, is to give new impetus to the exchange of trade between the two countries." This declaration was totally at variance with the facts. It was made less with a desire deliberately to distort the truth than to "save the face" of both the British Government and King Carol.

Mr. Neville Chamberlain, still in the mood of his "peace in our time" triumph at Munich, and fearing to disturb the European calm which, he fondly believed, his astuteness and diplomatic skill had almost miraculously achieved, was unwilling to provoke the so-easily upset Fuehrer by a too obviously overt act suggesting close and active Anglo-Roumanian collaboration. Hitler, Mr. Chamberlain held, might put a wrong construction on such a step; he might choose to interpret this as a demonstration against him; he might even charge the British Prime Minister, to whose personal pleas for peace he had yielded at Munich solely as "an act of grace", with a breach of the solemn engagements of the Four Power Pact for "peace in our time".

Apart from these sentimental and pseudo-political considerations, Mr. Chamberlain listened to the advice of his own chosen experts. Behind him stood his personally selected chief adviser on international affairs, Sir Horace Wilson. His views, on a European situation which required more adroit handling than at any other time in British history, carried more weight with the Prime Minister than the counsels of any other British diplomat or foreign expert. Sir Horace Wilson's status in the hierarchy of British diplomacy was undefined but, in practice, he wielded an authority, in relation to the Prime Minister, far in excess of the influence of any expert experienced in the conduct of international policy. His part in the shaping of Britain's foreign policy was infinitely more potent than that of any British Ambassador; he took precedence before all others, in the line of those to whom Mr. Chamberlain would listen with regard to the affairs of Europe. The Prime Minister heard the counsel of Sir Horace Wilson with more attention than he bestowed on that proffered by the Foreign Secretary himself.

On what grounds Mr. Chamberlain based his judgment of Sir Horace Wilson's capacity in the difficult field of foreign affairs has never been, and cannot be, explained except on the basis of personal predilection. During his long career as a distinguished

civil servant, Sir Horace Wilson's talents had been employed in administrative spheres far removed from and totally unconnected with international relations. He had graduated, through the various stages of departmental experience, to the exalted rank of Head of the Civil Service and had attained the eminence of Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Labour. There had not been a single occasion, in all his long period of service, on which he had been called upon to exhibit any exceptional knowledge of international politics. So far as is known, he had few connections with foreign countries or statesmen. He was not known to have any particularly intimate acquaintance with the intricacies of international problems or policies of a specifically political character. There was no evidence that he had ever demonstrated any unusual aptitude for any foreign language, though it might be thought that this would be an essential and indispensable qualification for the special foreign adviser of a Prime Minister whose own connection with foreign countries and knowledge of foreign languages was anything but adequate.

In the matter of Britain's traditional method of conducting international policies, always regarded as the exclusive and unquestioned prerogative of the Foreign Office, this lack of knowledge would, normally, not have been regarded as a handicap in the Prime Minister. But Mr. Chamberlain had taken the actual formulation of British foreign policy out of the hands of the Foreign Secretary and had arrogated to himself the right as well as the duty of moulding and executing it. He relied on Sir Horace Wilson for such guidance as he was willing to accept.

Sir Horace Wilson not only exercised a paramount and decisive influence over Mr. Chamberlain in the domain of European affairs; his views were listened to with deepest respect by the City of London. When the Roumanian King and his advisers were given finally to understand that British co-operation and aid to his country would go no farther than a pious expression of friendship and encouragement, they had no doubt, at all, that Sir Horace Wilson had played a supreme part in fashioning British policy and in determining the entirely negative response of the financiers in "The City" to King Carol's precise proposals for a British loan, credits and commercial assistance to Roumania.

Prior to King Carol's departure from London, I discussed the results of his mission with one of his advisers, a political and economic expert whose friendship and enthusiasm for Anglo-Roumanian collaboration were well known in London and Bucharest and had earned him a high place in the confidence of the King and in the esteem of British diplomats; he was rewarded, also, by the hostility of Hitler. This diplomat-economist was deeply depressed by what he regarded as his own as much as the King's failure in London. Cynically, he said, "I was perturbed

by an omen when we landed at Dover and arrived in London. It was foggy in the Channel and the fog grew worse as we went along; it was dense when we reached London". More seriously, he continued, "It is heart-breaking. After all that has happened at Munich, Britain does not seem to apprehend the true import of Hitler. The Balkans are being put at the mercy of the Nazis. Hungary is, to all intents and purposes, a vassal of Germany. That means that Hitler is on our doorstep and that, sooner or later, he will step over it. We have suggested that the way to keep him out is to fortify us with funds and armaments and to strengthen us by opening the British market to our products which will prove of inestimable value to Britain. We have failed. This is a direct incitement to Hitler to put pressure on us to yield him our natural riches under threat of forcible measures against us. King Carol will resist, of course. But how long will he be able to hold out?" There was ominous prophecy in these rather bitter words.

Commenting on the Roumanian King's mission, one British newspaper put the position succinctly:

"Roumania today stands at a difficult crossroads, seeking to maintain both her territorial integrity and her independence, both her markets and her friends. She has resisted attempts to drive her into the new German orbit, she has stood fast against the pressure of her ally, Poland, to force her into a so-called 'neutral bloc'. With oil fields which are the most important in Europe and a wheat belt which makes her Europe's granary, she contains minorities which render any provocative foreign policy hazardous. Britain, which has often been too indifferent to Roumania's political importance and too dilatory in seeking economic intercourse, has lately shown herself a customer upon a large scale for Roumania's wheat and could seize the opportunity for finding fresh markets for British goods—which may otherwise be lost for a generation. . . ."

Britain did not seize the opportunity.

Carol made one more effort to retrieve the position, one final attempt to arm himself with the material support and collaboration of the Western democracies, in preparation for his meeting with Hitler, to which neither the King nor any of his entourage looked forward with any zest or confidence. At the same time, this last move was, in itself, hazardous as well as bold, for, it carried with it the prospect of a further incitement to the anger of the Fuehrer, already violently displeased with the "provocative" visit to London. On the way to Berchtesgaden, Carol stopped at Paris.

He conferred with Edouard Daladier, the Prime Minister, with Georges Bonnet, the Foreign Minister, with Flandin and the hierarchy of French finance and the leading authorities in French

politics. To them he renewed the proposals for economic and financial assistance for Roumania and besought them to impress upon their British friends—and prospective allies—the necessity as well as the urgency of his needs in face of the certain demands which Hitler would soon seek to impose on him.

Carol remained in the French capital for five days, engaged in incessant argument, pleading and discussion. He put forward with cogency, skill and sincerity, all the points he had made in London. He appealed to the closer ties and interests with which France, since the last war, had sought to bind Roumania to her. He found no greater appreciation, in Paris, of the perils of his position than he had encountered in London—and he met with no greater success. Paris, even more than London, was enshrouded in the mist of Munich. The “appeasers” of France, actuated either by the fear of war with Hitler, or by sympathy with his political ideas, were as strong, if not stronger, than their counterparts in Britain. As in London, Carol received assurances of sympathy and offers of encouragement to resist Nazi encroachment—but he received nothing concrete in the way of promises or hope of material aid.

On November 23, 1938, Carol left Paris. Simultaneously, he learned that Iron Guard terrorism had increased in violence and intensity; it was especially violent in Transylvania. Just as he was leaving Paris, he was informed that the Chancellor of the University of Cluj had been murdered and the Royal Residents (Governors) of Cluj and Cernauti, his own personal nominees, had received letters threatening them with death.

These events were obviously intended to forewarn Carol that a meeting with the Fuehrer was not likely to be all jaunt and junketing. They were likely, also, to provide material with which to enable Hitler to comment upon the state of discontent and disorder in Carol's realm and to enquire whether, in the clear circumstance of his royal government's inability to control disaffected elements, it would not be desirable that the King should invite and accept the aid, say, of the powerful Third Reich, to assist him in restoring order and tranquillity in his state. Europe had already seen such manifestations of internal disruption—in Austria and Czechoslovakia—and how easily and effectively the strong arm of Nazi Germany had taken control and brought “order” to these unhappy countries.

Moreover, the disturbances in Roumania would, doubtless, help the Fuehrer to suggest that Carol could expect nothing from his British and French friends and to indicate to him that the unrest in his country was, perhaps, a popular expression of dissatisfaction with his endeavours to associate himself, an authoritarian ruler, with the democracies, instead of collaborating with the strength and purposefulness of Europe's one really Great Power—Germany.

There can be no doubt that such thoughts as these were in the mind of King Carol as he, with the Crown Prince Michael and Ernest Urdareanu, his Lord Great Chamberlain, sped towards Basle, *en route* to Berchtesgaden.

CHAPTER X

KING MEETS FUEHRER

AT BASLE, ON the German-Swiss frontier, Caro and his two companions were met by the Prince Friedrich of Hohenzollern and the Prince of Hesse. Friedrich was Carol's cousin and Head of his House of Sigmaringen-Hohenzollern. He had proclaimed his allegiance to Hitler and had accepted the Nazi doctrines of German government and the principle of the "Herren-Volk" prerogative to the overlordship of Europe. The prince, like so many others of his class, could easily accept Nazi dogmas because, for the most part, they were in the old tradition of German politics. The Fuehrer had inherited them from "blood and iron" Bismarck and the "place in the Sun" Kaiser Wilhelm the Second. Hitler's "Lebensraum", like so much else in Nazi Germany, is merely "ersatz"; old Germania gangsterised and in a new brown shirt.

Prince Friedrich had been nominated, with the Prince of Hesse, to persuade King Carol that a visit to Berchtesgaden was not only "highly desirable" but was much in his interests, having regard to the impending changes in the alignments of the European states based on the aims of the Berlin-Rome Axis and the rapidly growing might of Germany. The instructions of the Wilhelmstrasse were also to endeavour to dissuade Carol from going to London.

Prince Friedrich pursued his "mission" obediently and with zeal. He made several pilgrimages to Bucharest, before the Munich "settlement". He met with little success in his efforts to induce Carol not to undertake the projected visit to London but, instead, to "call on" the Fuehrer at Berchtesgaden. He found Carol the Hohenzollern truculently contemptuous of the Austrian house-painter upstart and obstinately averse from taking a step that would suggest recognition and acceptance by him of the notion of Hitler's sovereign rôle in Europe. Carol was unwilling, too, to do anything that might estrange him from Britain and France whose friendship he had so assiduously cultivated through all the years of his reign and of whose support, in an emergency, he believed he was certain. Moreover, he had set his heart on the State Visit to London as in the nature of a climax to his career as Sovereign of Roumania.

After Munich, a renewed Nazi assault was made to break down Carol's intransigence and to thwart his determination to go to

London. In a determined effort to induce the King to exchange his ticket to London for one to Berchtesgaden, Prince Friedrich and the Prince of Hesse combined with Fabricius, the Nazi Minister at Bucharest, and the economic envoys from Berlin, to employ the whole armoury and technique of persuasion, cajolery and menace, the well-proved weapons of Nazi "diplomacy".

Both the royal and the political emissaries of Hitler emphasised that the entire Balkan situation had been altered by the Munich arrangement. They alleged that, while there had been no open and public statement on the question of the Balkans, it had been secretly agreed by the four signatories to the Munich Pact—Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy—that the territories comprised in the Balkan States were to come within the "Lebensraum" of Nazi Germany. This, of course, was false.

Prince Friedrich also argued with Carol, tactfully but with insistence, chiefly on the grounds of the monarch's dynastic associations with Germany and the traditional German sympathies of his predecessors on the throne of Roumania. The menaces were left in the capable hands of Fabricius who made it clear to the King, with characteristic Prussian directness, that, if he refused to accept the suggestion of a visit to Hitler, his refusal would be regarded as an affront and a provocation to the Fuehrer and to Germany.

The pressure was intense, systematic and persistent. At last, in the light of what had happened to Austria and Czechoslovakia, and hopeful that he would find in London means to circumvent Hitler, Carol reluctantly yielded to the pressure of his Hohenzollern cousin and the threats of his Nazi collaborators. He insisted, however, that there could be no question of abandoning the visit to the British court which had once already been postponed, on account of difficulties in Roumania's internal situation. But he agreed to include a visit to Herr Hitler as part of his tour in Western Europe and on the conclusion of his stay in London. On the eve of Carol's departure for London, an officially authorised statement by a British News Agency said: "King Carol is also to visit Germany on an invitation by his cousin, Prince Friedrich of Hohenzollern."

Prince Friedrich accompanied King Carol, the Crown Prince Michael and the Lord Great Chamberlain, Urdareanu, on the motor-car journey from Basle to Berchtesgaden. In the Bavarian village at the foot of the mountain on whose peak the Fuehrer had constructed the Berghof, his fortress-palace retreat, the Prince Friedrich left Carol and his companions to proceed alone. Having performed his Fuehrer's errand and brought the royal quarry to the Nazi lair, his services were no longer required. Urdareanu was discarded at one of the many elaborate "guest villas", constructed like guard-houses, on the winding mountain path that led to the Fuehrer's magnificent and fortified residence on the mountain crag.

Hitler performed the normal courtesies appropriate to the reception of a Head of a State by awaiting his royal visitor at the top of the stone steps at the main entrance to the Berghof. The meeting was formal, without indication of pleasure on either side. Hitler's official photographers "snapped" their camera shutters at the precise moment when the Fuehrer, standing two steps above the Roumanian King and appearing to tower over him, extended his hand in greeting. The position of Carol, two steps lower than Hitler, made it seem as if he were making obeisance to the Leader of the Third Reich. This was well suggested by the photographers.

Carol was not slow to apprehend this little piece of stage management and, later, expressed the view that it was obviously planned, with heavy subtlety, to suggest the relative positions of master and vassal. He did not appreciate the gesture, however, and, having presented the Crown Prince Michael, withdrew into a regal stiffness of manner, as he accompanied the Fuehrer, walking between him and his son, to the Nazi "holy of holies", the great Chamber of Glass looking out, on all sides, on the grim, forebodingly dark mountain peaks surrounding the Berghof. This was the same chamber in which, two months before, Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of Great Britain, had come to plead with Hitler to stay his hand against the democratic Republic of Czechoslovakia and to beg him not to plunge another generation of Europe into war.

Field-Marshal Hermann Goering was waiting in the "spider's web" (as the high-perched, glass-encircled reception room of the Fuehrer was afterwards described by Carol) when Hitler and his royal guests entered it. There was the customary exchange of Fascist salutes between the two Nazi leaders. When Hitler presented Goering to Carol and his son, the Field-Marshal raised his right arm in Fascist greeting but the King ignored the gesture and proffered the normal handshake.

It was the early afternoon, and when Carol and Hitler were seated, with the Crown Prince and Goering on either side of them, lackeys in heavily ornate livery served tea. Conversation was desultory, formal and entirely "tea party" in content. The Fuehrer, maintaining a steady flow of conversation, seemed in high good humour and eager to impress his visitor.

Carol, describing the interview afterwards, in Bucharest, related that there appeared to be a malicious gleam in the steely eyes of Hitler and that his smile and affability of manner were neither spontaneous nor real but suggested a kind of sadistic joy in the strange destiny that had brought a ruling sovereign, scion of one of the proudest dynasties of Europe, a Hohenzollern, to a once unknown and despised commoner now the despot on whose word the world waited breathlessly and whose acts every nation of Europe feared. In fact, this was the first time that a reigning sovereign had come to visit Hitler.

The Roumanian King, on his part, maintained an attitude of quiet reserve and courteous dignity. He observed that, throughout the "tea party", and, particularly, during the long conversation that followed, an unusual number of uniformed servants hovered about the room, came and went in regular procession, without apparent reason, and without performing any obvious duties. He came to the conclusion that they were members of the Gestapo, in the masquerade attire of the Fuehrer's personal attendants.

On the conclusion of tea, Carol, taking his cigarette case from his pocket, asked the Fuehrer's permission that he might smoke. Hitler, tightening his lips a little, remarked pointedly that, as His Majesty was probably aware, he was not himself addicted to the habit of smoking but if His Majesty desired to smoke there was, of course, no objection. Goering, known to be a heavy smoker, declined the King's offer of a cigarette and Carol lit his own. The Crown Prince Michael, taking the Fuehrer's permission as applying to himself, followed his father's example and also lit a cigarette. Hitler frowned with obvious displeasure and, as the young man began to smoke he glared at him with studied anger, so directly, that the Prince, quite disconcerted, hastily crushed his cigarette in the ash-tray.

The "discussion" lasted two and a half hours. It was almost entirely a one-sided affair in which Hitler indulged in his customary and well-known monologue but without the carefully-fabricated frenzy with which he usually sought to impress and to intimidate his prospective victims. From time to time, as he talked incessantly in high-pitched tones, he rose and stalked about the room as if to curb the emotion that might impel him to abandon the restraint upon his righteous indignation against the malign forces arrayed against him and which sought to thwart his designs for the good and peace of Europe.

Hitler harangued Carol at inordinate length and with laboriously studied efforts to impress the King by his sincerity and goodwill, by his peaceful intentions and by his desire to achieve the noble purposes of a regenerate Germany, without injury to the European states and without any derogation from their interests, rights or sovereignty. He reiterated, with insistent emphasis, that he had "no territorial ambitions" in Europe or elsewhere. He maintained that his sole desire and the mainspring of his European policy, were the security and dignity of the Third Reich which had, so long, suffered humiliation and enslavement and suppression at the hands of the so-called democratic powers.

He aimed only, Hitler said, at the economic development of Greater Germany in a "free Europe" through co-operation, in the fields of trade and industry, with all the states of Europe which should have the common purpose of strengthening and developing their economic resources to their mutual advantage.

All the European countries should be united, he pleaded, by one common political determination to resist and eradicate the menace which overshadowed all other problems and threatened the well-being and existence of all the European peoples—the menace of Bolshevism.

Hitler depicted, in lurid colours, that “threat to all civilisation”. His voice, at this stage, rose to a crescendo of rhetorical violence, as he scornfully described Soviet Russia as “this foul scar on the face of mankind”. The Fuehrer, looking straight into Carol’s eyes, with face flushed by the well-simulated vehemence of his emotion and with arms outstretched in a gesture of pleading, rasped out the question “How do the rulers of Europe pretend to be able to arrest this tidal wave that will assuredly engulf them? How is this pestilence to be destroyed?”

Without waiting for, and without expecting Carol’s response, Hitler gave the answer to his question in mixed metaphor—“I am the only possible defender of Europe and the world against Bolshevism. You and the other rulers ought to know that I, and only I, can protect mankind against the march of Moscow.”

Hitler expanded this theme and elaborated his rôle as “the saviour from Bolshevism”, with quite obvious gusto and a fine display of righteous and disinterested crusading fervour. He enlarged meaningfully on the armed might of Germany which had been created on his initiative and at his “command” (*Befehl*). But, with deliberation and great care, he explained that the gigantic military strength of the New Germany had been constructed without any intent to encroach on the rights and interests, far less on the territories or sovereignty, of the independent states of Germany’s neighbours or to impose on Europe the hegemony of Germany.

The armed might of Germany, Hitler argued, had been created, solely and exclusively, as a barrier against the “Communist marauders and despoilers”. He insisted that, instead of regarding with suspicion his restoration of Germany as the greatest military power, Europe and the rest of the world should accept this development, and himself as its inspiration, with relief and gratitude. Most of all, those peoples and countries contiguous with and, therefore, more directly threatened by the Bolshevik “bandits”, had reason to be grateful to him and should, in the interests of their own safety and peaceful development, be not only willing but eager to collaborate with him.

Hitler was leading up, slowly but quite deliberately, to a “discussion” of his attitude towards Roumania itself and to the real purpose behind the “invitation” to Berchtesgaden. It was clear to Carol that the Fuehrer, for all the apparent spontaneity of his discourse, had carefully studied his “approach” to him and had fully rehearsed his argument. Evidently this was not the time, yet, for “Schussnigg tactics”, the frontal attack of menacing brutality

against a weak victim who was to be intimidated into nervous exhaustion by threats of violence and a display of revolvers on the table and, finally, to be cowed into submission and surrender by a warning that all was in readiness for the immediate invasion of the victim's territory.

Roumania had not yet been successfully disintegrated from within, like Austria. Carol was a monarch, not a Chancellor. He had, still, the aura of kingship about him and he was surrounded by the semi-religious homage that a peasant, and not highly developed, people associated with a royal dynasty and the person of a king. In his rule, Carol had shown, too, great strength of purpose and policy; he reigned with almost absolute authority. He had consolidated his country into one authoritarian political party under his own leadership and owing obedience only to him.

These were stubborn factors which caused Hitler to go warily with Carol and to eschew, for the moment, the methods which had brought the Austrian Chancellor and his unfortunate country into the Nazi grip. Nor was the stage yet quite set for a grand and spectacular *coup* on the model of the disruption of Czechoslovakia. Hitler had decided, apparently, that, for the present, persuasive cajolery and an astute playing on Roumania's particular fears would be the more effective instrument with which to draw Carol into the Nazi web. Carol, later, described the Fuehrer's game as "the spider attitude".

The enticing threads which Hitler dangled before the eyes of Carol were the "revisionist" claims of Soviet Russia and Hungary. The rich province of Bessarabia, detached from Russia and brought into Greater Roumania after the Great War, had been a constant source of irritation between the two countries and an ever-present source of fear on the part of Roumania that, "one day", her powerful neighbour on the north would demand and force restitution. Against that possibility, Hitler now proffered Carol the aid of Germany's irresistible might, not directly, of course, but as part of the Nazi crusade against Bolshevism.

Then, there was the clamour of the Hungarians for the return of Transylvania and, since Hungary had come within the orbit of Hitler's Germany, their ever-increasing threats to secure its restoration by armed force. On this question, the most inflammable and delicate of all Roumania's external problems, Hitler was at his wiliest. He assured Carol that Roumania need have no fear that Hungary would be permitted to obtain, far less to seize, these fertile wheat lands of his western province. The claim, he conceded, was no more than a technical one and could hardly be sustained on other than legalistic grounds which were no real foundation of a demand for the transfer of territory from one state to another. Transfer of lands should be determined, the great-hearted Fuehrer

maintained, solely by the needs, interests and the clear, freely-expressed wishes of the human beings who dwelt in them.

Hitler affected a complete lack of interest in the Hungarians. "I do not like the Hungarians," he told Carol. "I do not and shall not endorse their frontier pretensions." In one of the few interventions, by way of comment, that Carol permitted himself or the volubility of Hitler allowed, the King expressed his satisfaction with the German Chancellor's assurance on this matter.

Hitler now seemed satisfied and content that he was advancing "according to plan" in the direction of persuading Carol that, as Fuehrer of the Third Reich, he was motivated only by good intentions towards all states, except Soviet Russia, and that his policies were entirely selfless, directed solely to the common good. He "discussed" the Balkans, but tactfully, and with refinement, he did not mention Roumania itself. There was a natural economic affiliation between the Balkan countries and Germany, he declared. The great agricultural populations of South-Eastern Europe were in urgent and constant need of the industrial products of the highly skilled workmen of the German factories. Reciprocally, the great industrial populations of the German cities were an inexhaustible market for the food supplies of the Balkans.

What could be more natural and essential, the Fuehrer enquired of his royal visitor, than the closest collaboration, in the economic sphere, between the Balkan States and Germany? A perfectly dove-tailed economic combination of markets; cheap, mass-produced manufactured goods in exchange for large-scale food-stuff production. Germany was in an unassailable position to offer the Balkan countries economic advantages. She could offer financial aid for development and technical skill. Her proximity to Eastern Europe was an important factor for Balkan trade. She was ready to bring their mutual markets still closer together by improving and extending means of transport by land, water, and air.

What other country could offer such inestimable benefits to the backward Balkans? Hitler suggested. The Western democracies were in no situation, even if they showed any willingness, to give economic aid to Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and could not compete with German ability and eagerness to bring prosperity to the peoples of these areas. Carol made brief gestures indicating his appreciation of the Fuehrer's anxiety for the well-being of the Balkans. He noted that Hitler made no specific suggestions for economic "collaboration"; and Carol did not, himself, make any observations as to how it could or should be effected. He noted also that Hitler made no single reference to oil or wheat.

Thus far, there had been nothing in the Fuehrer's survey to cause Carol any undue uneasiness or to disturb his courteous reserve of manner. Hitler had merely repeated his well-worn themes, his long-formulated concoction of vainglorious boastings, assertions of good

intentions and indirect menaces that he had roared from hundreds of Nazi platforms, to the delight of his well-drilled and worshipping braves. Carol knew the whole story and was under no illusion about the purpose of Hitler's speech or about what he had left unsaid.

The only novel feature of the Fuehrer's monologue was the comparative reticence of tone and gesture with which he delivered it. The King was shrewd enough to realise that he ought not to put any other interpretation upon Hitler's discourse than that it was a superficial display of restraint signifying no more than a laboured demonstration of good manners as between Heads of States. There may have been, too, something in the regal calm of the monarch that impelled Hitler to put a brake on his customary excitability and brutishness of manner and tone when he lectured someone who had cause to fear him and who could be bullied into exhibiting signs of distress.

More than two hours had passed and Carol, by shifting a little in his chair, was giving indications of his willingness to bring the interview to a close. Quick to perceive these signs of royal satiety, Hitler paused abruptly in his discourse on Germano-Balkan economics. Glaring disapprovingly at Carol and, with a suggestion of arrogance, he asked suddenly if he would consider releasing Corneliu Codreanu from prison. The King returned Hitler's gaze without visible symptom that he was in any way disturbed by this unusual and clearly provocative question which barely concealed the suggestion of a demand.

Hitler gave him no opportunity for a hasty reply but launched into a new harangue, this time with considerably more acerbity than he had hitherto exhibited. He had permitted himself a personal interest in the leader of the Roumanian Iron Guard, he said tartly, and knew well the aims of his movement. He was certain that Codreanu was a genuine and sincere Roumanian patriot.

The Iron Guard, Hitler asserted vehemently, was not a subversive organisation, either directed against the authority of the King or acting as the instrument of any foreign power. Its manifestations of unrest were, Hitler suggested angrily and with emphasis, the expression of purely local discontents and opposition to influences which Codreanu and his followers considered to be injurious to their country and an obstacle to the Roumanian nation's aspirations for peaceful development in accordance with its rightful destiny. He understood the necessity, under certain conditions of internal disturbance, that a government might be obliged to take strong measures to destroy rebellious elements. But the Iron Guard was not rebellious. He could only reach the conclusion, therefore, that His Majesty's Government had adopted unusually stern measures against the Iron Guard because of a fundamental misinterpretation of the purposes and philosophies of Herr Codreanu's

movement. Hitler concluded by asserting that, according to his reliable information, the repression of the Iron Guard was altogether too harsh. Codreanu was in ill-health, and on this ground alone, he suggested, as a matter of mercy, as well as urgency, that Codreanu should be given his liberty.

Carol listened calmly to this outburst and gave no sign of his inward impatience and irritation. This, clearly, was an insolent interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, as well as a pointed affront to the monarch himself. The menace of Hitler's suggestion was equally obvious. His changed manner did not leave that in any doubt. He had indicated with clarity the full portent of his "personal interest" in Codreanu and his Iron Guard; he hardly dissembled his right to a protective concern for the Roumanian rebels, whose "philosophies and purposes" he understood so well.

If Carol ever had any illusions about the close association between the Iron Guard and Nazi Germany and Codreanu's rôle as the appointed agent of Hitler's plans for the disruption of Roumania, these were now dispelled. Hitler had given him the first brutal intimation that Roumania was within his "sphere of influence" and that he felt himself in a position to assert his authority in it. The demand for the release of Codreanu, coupled with the criticism of Carol's actions with regard to him, were a direct challenge to the King's status as a sovereign ruler, to the authority of his Government, and to the independence of his country.

Any suggestion of weakness on Carol's part in so critical a situation would mean surrender and the collapse of his authority. It would mean acceptance of Roumanian vassalage to the overlordship of Hitler. Carol resolved, therefore, to accept the challenge, summarily to reject the pretensions of the Nazi leader and to assert his status as the monarch of a sovereign and independent state.

Showing little sign of impatience and none of perturbation, he rose from his chair and looking squarely in the irate, flushed face of Hitler, said calmly: "Herr Reichskanzler, *I am the King of Roumania. I shall know how to deal with this matter.*"

Hitler paled with ill-concealed rage. He uttered not a single word in response to this curt rejection of the all-powerful Fuehrer's "request", he merely held out his hand in signal that the meeting was at an end. He followed Carol to the door of the audience chamber. Goering escorted the King and his son to the door of the Berghof and bowed politely as they entered their motor car.

It was related in Bucharest afterwards that, when Goering returned to the presence of his Fuehrer, he found Hitler in an almost uncontrollable fury. He stalked about the room, muttering and glaring like a maniac at the mist-laden, black mountain peaks of the Bavarian Alps. But at dinner that night, surrounded by his

Ministers and intimates, the report continued, Hitler had regained his composure and was in a mood of exultation. Several times, glaring gleefully round his table, he exclaimed: "Es war bei mir ein Königlein"—a petty King has been to see *me*.

CHAPTER XI

CAROL STRIKES AT HITLER'S "PROTÉGÉS"

THE RETURN JOURNEY from Berchtesgaden to Bucharest was not a happy one. King Carol was in sombre mood, taciturn and preoccupied. The Crown Prince Michael, normally shy and naturally inclined to be somewhat moody, had been rather overwhelmed by the strange personality of the Fuehrer, by his heavy frownings and raucous declamation, and he, too, was depressed. Carol told Urdareanu what had occurred in the Berghof and discussed its implications and probable consequences. The conclusions reached were far from comforting to the King and bore anything but a happy augury for Roumania's peace and independence.

Carol was a much shrewder politician than Mr. Neville Chamberlain and had a much keener understanding of European affairs than Sir Horace Wilson. He was not deceived by the sly, but laboured purrings of the Nazi tiger and, with the ominous precedent of Austria and Czechoslovakia before him, he saw very clearly what underlay Hitler's allusions to the armed might of Nazi Germany and his eagerness to bestow upon the Balkan States the boon of prosperity—through an economic partnership with the Third Reich.

Carol well understood, too, the full purport of Hitler's audacity in openly adopting Codreanu and the Iron Guard as his protégés. He realised fully that, by his almost contemptuous defiance of the Fuehrer and by his implied but unmistakable rejection of Hitler's arrogant assumption of the rôle of protector of Roumania's rebellious terrorist movement, he had invited the Nazi leader's wrath and the certainty of his ultimate vengeance. The King regretted that he had allowed himself to be persuaded to make the journey to Berchtesgaden; he confessed that he had made a major error in not adhering to his own judgment that to pay a visit to Hitler would be regarded by him as an act of submission, would be used as a weapon of Nazi intimidation, and would be interpreted by others as a symptom of fear and surrender.

At the same time, Carol had the satisfaction of knowing that the monologue at the Berghof confirmed his appraisal of the way events were shaping in Europe. He knew now that Munich had "appeased"

Hitler only as a brief interlude, preparatory to a grand assault far beyond the frontiers of Czechoslovakia. He was certain, now, that all the warnings he had uttered in London and Paris about Hitler's intentions with regard to Roumania were fully justified. He reflected, despondently, that the British and French refusal to heed these warnings and to give him the support he required, had left him high and dry and alone on the path of Hitler's aggressive plans to subvert Roumania and, if need be, to destroy her, as part of the major scheme to bring the Balkans within the Nazi orbit.

Carol reflected grimly that his much-trumpeted mission as "Ambassador of my people" was a ghastly failure. He was returning from London and Paris empty-handed, except for expressions of goodwill. From Berchtesgaden, he was bringing menaces. In Bucharest, he would certainly have to meet renewed hostility on the part of his political opponents and the machinations of treasonable elements among his subjects, as well as those of the alien disturbers of Roumanian peace, working underground and furnishing the funds, the munitions and the propaganda with which to foment internal revolt and spread disaffection. Roumania's political horizon seemed to Carol already to be darkening and with it his own mood clouded.

Studiously he avoided another meeting on the return journey through Germany, with his cousin Friedrich who had insisted so assiduously that the visit to Hitler would be in the good interests of Roumania and the dynasty but which, in the result, had been humiliating and irritating. In the discussions with Urdareanu and the Crown Prince he voiced his resentment against his tainted kinsman with the sharp forcefulness of expression at which, in moments of anger, he was an adept. The titular head of his House had deliberately, or so it appeared, invited him to enter "the spider's web". This was a treasonable act on the part of a member of his own family and served only to emphasise the isolation and the difficulty of his position. Carol's anger was all the greater since he was in no doubt that, sooner or later, Hitler would begin his campaign of vengeance against him, either openly or, more probably, by the characteristic Nazi devices of internal corrosion, political and economic pressure and incitement to rebellion.

Carol was not afraid; lack of courage was never a failing of his. On the contrary, bold resolution in time of crisis—and there were many in his career—was a conspicuous facet of his character. His enemies called this obstinacy and arrogance. He was, moreover, deeply conscious of his dynastic rôle and of the rights and dignities of sovereignty, as well as of its responsibilities. All these were now being challenged by Hitler and it was not in Carol's nature to yield to any suggestion of weakness or irresolution, far less of fear. He resolved, therefore, to assert himself as a sovereign ruler, to meet, boldly and fearlessly, with or without assistance, any attack

that Hitler might launch against him or his authority and to resist any pressure that he might, directly or indirectly, exert on him. He had not long to wait for the disclosure of Hitler's intentions and for the opportunity to demonstrate his own quality.

During a brief stop in Switzerland, he was handed a volume of despatches from his Minister of the Interior, Armand Calinescu. These told, in vivid detail, an ominously grim tale of a renewed and widespread wave of riot and terrorism that had broken out all over Roumania. Carol noted, from Calinescu's messages, that the outbreak of insurrectionary violence had started within a few hours of his departure from Berchtesgaden. That the Iron Guardists had received orders from Nazi agents, acting on instructions from Germany, to organise and carry out disturbances on a large scale was revealed in documents seized by the Roumanian police in raids on premises known to be Iron Guard "centres" in Bucharest, Cluj, Cernauti, Ploesti and elsewhere. In these cities there was bomb throwing which caused many casualties. Attempts were made to seize the telegraph and post offices and to set fire to other public buildings. Especially violent and brutal were the attacks against the Jews, especially in the country districts where the peasants were incited to ravage and plunder Jewish-owned shops and homes. Synagogues were burned down after their sacred Scrolls of the Law and religious ornaments had been ostentatiously removed and set alight.

Calinescu informed the King that there was evidence of insubordination and insurrectionary unrest in certain sections of the army and that, in some districts, notably in Transylvania and in the Third Army Corps, officers and soldiers under their command were acting in concert with the Iron Guardists to provoke and carry out terrorism. The Commander of the Third Army Corps was General Ion Antonescu, a former Chief of the General Staff and Minister of War in the pro-Fascist, anti-semitic Government of Octavian Goga. Antonescu's sympathies with the Iron Guard had long been known; his secret collaboration with Codreanu had been suspected. Calinescu now told the King that the General had been discovered to be in clandestine communication with the imprisoned Iron Guard leader, and had used his position and authority to enable Codreanu to maintain connection with his followers and with Hitler's agents.

Carol acted with promptitude and determination. He resolved to make a decisive stroke, at once to give a clear demonstration to Hitler that he was no abject weakling, afraid of Nazi menaces. He resolved to give the Fuehrer and the world, unmistakable evidence that Roumania had a ruler, whose statement, "I am master of my country", was no empty boast, and that he was a monarch capable of dealing with the gravest challenge to his authority, no matter from which direction that challenge might come.

He decided finally to destroy the organisation which, for so long, had sought to disrupt his state and undermine his throne. The moment had come to assert the independence of Roumania.

It had been his intention to make a brief stay in Switzerland as a relief from the exacting strains of London, as a restorative after the disappointments there and in Paris and as a sedative after the irritations of Berchtesgaden. Now, there was no time to be lost. Having digested the bad news from Calinescu, he quickly resumed his journey to Roumania. But, before he set out, he communicated to the Minister of the Interior explicit instructions to suppress with the utmost rigour and ruthlessness, and without mercy, every manifestation of revolt, and to crush, without compunction and, wherever necessary by force, its organisers, ringleaders and those who acted in their name.

When his train steamed into Timisoara, at the Roumanian frontier, Carol was joined by Calinescu and, on the journey to Bucharest, received from him further details of the extent of the terrorist plot and the measures that had been taken to restore order.

In accordance with the King's instructions, the gendarmerie had been ordered to shoot at sight wherever there had been any attempt to disturb peace and create disorder. Shootings had been numerous and casualties among the insurgents had been heavy. Many hundreds of Iron Guardists and their known supporters were in prison and the jails were taxed to capacity. Neither the military nor the armed police had, however, been brought into action and no disciplinary measures had been taken against unruly elements in the army. Calinescu reported that, in consequence of the Government's strong action, there had been a sensible diminution of terroristic activity but sporadic, though serious outbreaks of violence were still taking place.

He also informed the King that there was a noticeable agitation, by pamphlets and by word of mouth, against him and his Government, accusing its members, but chiefly Carol, of "betraying the country" by criminal acts, corruption and malpractice. The country was being flooded with written propaganda, produced from mysterious and clandestine printing presses denouncing "the royal tyrant and his Jewish accomplices" and calling on the nation to "rid themselves of their oppressors". In all these rebellious manifestations, the King's name was invariably coupled with that of Madame Lupescu, who was described in the most scurrilous and opprobrious terms. The character and expression of this written agitation bore the unmistakable imprint of the Nazi technique and there could be no doubt that German funds had provided it and that German hands had, at least, aided in its production.

Immediately on his arrival at Bucharest on the afternoon of November 28, the King summoned his principal Ministers to a special conference in his study at the Royal Palace. The following

morning, the country was given evidence that Carol had taken control of the situation and was directing operations to restore order. The press published a brief announcement that General Ion Antonescu had been removed from his command of the Third Army Corps; but there was no statement that he had been transferred to any other command, or that he had been given any other employment. The official notice gave as the reason for the General's dismissal that he had been found guilty of "an unauthorised political attitude". No one in Roumania misunderstood the meaning or the implication of that cautious and vaguely worded phrase. Everyone knew that behind it lay a clear warning to the army that drastic punishment would be meted out to any in its ranks who would be found to have associations with the Iron Guard or who might be tempted to sympathise with its subversive activities.

By degrading Antonescu, an officer in the highest ranks of the Army, Carol proclaimed with conspicuous clarity, that he was prepared, ruthlessly, to purge the armed forces, to demand implicit obedience to his authority as Commander-in-Chief, and to insist on strict observance of the oath of allegiance to himself as King. The effect was immediate. Unrest in the army subsided and many officers hastened to demonstrate, with remarkable haste, their loyalty to the King and their abhorrence of the traitorous activities of the Iron Guard.

Coincident with the announcement of Antonescu's dismissal came the news that Prince Alexander Cantacuzene, member of one of the best known aristocratic families of Roumania, had been arrested. This Cantacuzene, who was also a general, had been one of Codreanu's earliest adherents and had become one of his most fervent admirers. He was a benign old gentleman, without conspicuous talents either as a soldier or as a politician. But his lineage and aristocratic associations had been invaluable in enabling Codreanu to propagate the doctrines of the Iron Guard among the upper strata of Roumanian society where Carol was never popular and had never courted popularity.

The feudal landed gentry of Roumania had always resented the King's unconcealed preference, in his choice of friends and associates, for men and women of lesser rank but greater talent. His intimates were, for the most part, invariably and conspicuously drawn from the commercial and industrial sections of the community for which the proud and pleasure-loving Roumanian aristocracy always had a supreme contempt. His persistent refusal to institute ranks of nobility in Roumania and to award titles of honour, widened the gulf between him and the old families. His predilection for land reform for the benefit of the peasantry rendered that cleavage more acute. Above all, his long and obstinate association with Lupescu, the commoner and reputed Jewess, enhanced the latent hostility of the traditionally anti-semitic upper classes of Roumania.

Here, then, was a potentially fertile field in which Codreanu could sow the seeds of dissension and opposition to Carol. As elsewhere, Fascism was a doctrine easily absorbed by feudal elements, if allied, as it always has been, with the facile nostrums of pseudo-patriotism. In its early stages, the Iron Guard made little or no headway among the aristocracy of Roumania, because Codreanu himself was of humble origin and had essayed to spread his creed by a popular appeal for the redressing of "the people's grievances". His propaganda was directed especially to the peasantry whose backwardness and lack of education enabled him, through his demagogic eloquence, to obtain easy applause; here he gained numerous adherents who became the backbone of his movement. The Roumanian peasants were, however, for centuries little more than the serfs of the Boyar landowners and, consequently, a movement which professed to be the champion of their interests was looked upon without enthusiasm by their masters.

While Codreanu could boast of the numerical strength of his Iron Guard supporters he found that the larger his organisation grew, the greater the financial burden of maintaining it. The peasants could, and did, give him applause and fanatical devotion, but their poverty and thriftiness deterred them from supplying the Iron Guard with adequate funds. He was obliged, therefore, to find sources of supply in quarters where money was both more plentiful and more easily gained. He turned to the aristocracy and re-enunciated his doctrines to suit their tastes and special prejudices.

The Iron Guard thereupon became the protagonist of "Roumanian patriotism" and addressed itself, more generally, to the "youthful spirit of the nation". He renamed the movement the "All for the Fatherland" party and proclaimed his intention of purging the nation of "all undesirable elements". He made clear his hostility to the King and to all his associates. To complete his plans for party expansion he required a bridge between himself, of lowly birth, and his social superiors. He found it in General Prince Cantacuzene who gave the Iron Guard its much needed respectability and a veneer of dignity. The Prince was assiduous as well as enthusiastic in spreading among his own class Codreanu's politics and philosophies. He developed a slavish admiration for "Capitanul" Codreanu, and, in the course of time, the Iron Guard made considerable headway among the wealthy landowners and rich aristocrats who relieved the party of financial anxieties until the German Nazis with their more ample resources for the fomenting of subversive movements in prospective spheres of influence and power in the planned "living spaces" abroad, came to Codreanu's aid and purchased his services and those of his movement for the fulfilment of German designs.

The significance of the arrest of Cantacuzene then, lay less in the importance of the individual than in the fact that it was a

measure of Carol's determination to strike quickly and hard at the sources of treason and a warning to dissident elements, irrespective of station, of his firm resolve no longer to tolerate their activities. Like the result of the dismissal of Antonescu, there was an immediate scurrying underground of many socially eminent members of Cantacuzene's circle; and unusually enthusiastic demonstrations of loyalty to the King came from others hitherto not conspicuous for their affection for him, or for their sympathy with his policies and conduct of affairs.

There remained, however, the most sinister factor of all in this internal turmoil—the Iron Guard itself. While the clubs, cafés and officers' messes were deeply impressed with the King's bold and energetic action with regard to the Army and the "upper classes", the general opinion was that he shrank from challenging directly the insurrectionary movement itself because, it was alleged, he feared its strength and, more particularly, the inevitable wrath of its patron, Nazi Germany. The absence of any measures other than those officially disclosed suggested that Carol believed these measures would be sufficient to stem the progress of rebellion, and that the eminence of the men selected for the demonstration of his policy would be adequate evidence that he had control of the situation. These were mistaken views.

At noon, on Tuesday, November 30, the Bucharest newspapers carried, under heavy headlines, the startling announcement that Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, leader of the Iron Guard, with thirteen of his principal henchmen had been shot dead "while trying to escape" from imprisonment.

In April, when Carol had ordered a nation-wide round-up of the ringleaders of the Iron Guard and more than two thousand of its members, who included Prefects, Senators, Mayors and government officials throughout the country, were arrested and imprisoned, Codreanu and his chief lieutenants were lodged in the military prison at Jilava, outside Bucharest. The Iron Guard seemed to have been dealt a crushing blow and the absence of any manifestation of unrest during the next few months suggested that its claws had been effectively clipped.

The recrudescence of terrorism, coincident with the King's sojourn in Western Europe, gave the Roumanian authorities a rude awakening. It was realised, not only that Codreanu's rebellious organisation was still in being, but that its activities were being directed from the prison cells themselves. Communication with Codreanu and his staff had been maintained by means of an elaborate underground system involving the press, the army, the radio and government and municipal officials. Members of the church were also suspected of acting as a channel of communication between the Iron Guard prisoners and the secret centres of its organisation outside.

Suborned and subsidised Fascist newspapers like *Curentul* and

Buna Vestire, the Iron Guard official party organ, had been used skilfully to transmit and receive messages in code, giving news to the imprisoned leaders and circulating their instructions. This was done chiefly by means of seemingly innocent personal and commercial advertisements and by cipher messages cunningly inserted in the text of outwardly innocuous articles.

The Government suspected, too, that many of the prison guards were secretly acting in concert with their prisoners and were actively aiding them by passing on and receiving communications between them and their fellow conspirators still at large. In order to break up the subterranean organisation and to render communication between its members more difficult, the police authorities decided to keep their Iron Guard prisoners "on the march". They were, consequently, moved, at irregular intervals, from prison to prison; this plan was elaborated when plots to release the Iron Guard leaders came to the knowledge of the authorities or were suspected. Evidence accumulated that a plan was being prepared for a general prison break and an armed Iron Guard march on Bucharest, on the lines of Mussolini's famous Fascist march on Rome. There was now no doubt at all that Codreanu and his Nazi allies were planning a *coup d'état* on the grand scale, the seizure of the government and the dethroning of King Carol.

At the time of King Carol's return to Bucharest from Berchtesgaden, Codreanu and his principal colleagues were under a strongly reinforced guard at the Ramnicu-Sarat prison. Information had reached the Ministry of the Interior, during the intensive investigations carried out in the course of the efforts to suppress the country-wide terrorism, that a determined attempt was to be made by armed force to snatch Codreanu and the others from imprisonment.

Late on the night of Monday, November 29, Codreanu and thirteen of his fellow-prisoners, the leading members of the Iron Guard, were taken from their cells and placed in lorries under specially selected and trusted guards, heavily armed. To outwit the conspirators, and in order that the prisoners should be brought under the more immediate surveillance of the Ministry of the Interior, the prison governor had been given secret orders to transport his prisoners by a circuitous route to the Jilava gaol, their original place of confinement. The guards were instructed to take "the sternest measures" in the event of any attempt at rescue. They were to shoot on the slightest sign that might indicate that the prisoners were attempting to escape.

The convoy, travelling with as much speed as the darkness of the night and the heavily-rutted country-roads permitted, proceeded for several hours without incident. At five o'clock in the morning, on the Bucharest-Ploesti road, the convoy reached a point about twenty-five miles from the capital. This was a stretch of road, densely wooded on both sides, near the village of Tancabesti.

In the deep gloom, intensified by the tall and closely packed trees, the convoy slowed down. Suddenly there was a heavy burst of rifle fire from the woods on both sides of the road. The lorries stopped and the armed guards immediately returned the fire. Just as the shooting was at its fiercest, the prisoners, according to the official report subsequently issued by the Army Corps Headquarters, leapt down from the lorries, scattered, and made a dash for the woods. The escort thereupon "fulfilled the legal requirements". They shouted to the escaping men to halt, but they paid no heed and continued to run. Switching on the headlights of the lorries to pick out the prisoners, the guards opened fire on them with machine gun and rifle. One by one the fugitives fell dead. Codreanu was among the first to fall, riddled with bullets. With him on the roadside lay the bodies of his thirteen companions.

All these men had been convicted of murder and had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Three were among the most notorious "killers" in the whole Iron Guard movement and the leaders of the most sinister of its terrorist conspiracies. They were the murderers of the Prime Minister Ion Duca whom they had assassinated on New Year's Eve, 1933, as he stepped from the train at Sinaia station, while on the way to the King's country palace in the hills above the town. The murder was the Iron Guard's vengeance, carefully planned and remorselessly executed, for Duca's drastic measures, promulgated a fortnight before, to repress one of the periodic outbursts of rioting and violence which had then terrorised Roumania. He had declared publicly in Paris that the Iron Guard was an insurrectionary movement subsidised by Hitler. It was Nicolai Constantinescu who had fired, at close range, the first shot which caused the Premier to fall, bleeding and dangerously wounded, on the station platform. The assassin continued to pour bullets into the body of the dying man while his fellow murderers, Jon Caranica and Doru Belimace, held back, at revolver point, the station officials and the members of the Premier's suite.

The other ten who fell dead on the Bucharest-Ploesti road were the men who had carried out the assassination of an Iron Guard leader, Stelescu, who was believed to have ambitions to rival Codreanu and was suspected of conspiring to supplant him in the leadership. While he lay in a Bucharest hospital recovering from a serious operation, these men obtained admission to his room on the pretence of a visit to the sick man, and riddled him with bullets as he held out his hand to greet them.

These murderers were not merely in the inner circle of the Iron Guard high command and the "brains" of the organisation; they were extolled and venerated as among the "heroes" of the movement, no less great than the men who, later, fought and were killed in Spain on the side of Fascism against the Spanish Democratic Republic and whose burial-place in the garden of the Green House,

Codreanu's headquarters outside Bucharest, was a holy shrine for the members of the Iron Guard.

The bodies of Codreanu and the thirteen other victims of the unsuccessful ambush were collected from the roadside, bundled into the lorries and covered rudely with canvas. The convoy continued its journey to the original destination. In the early morning hours, the dead Iron Guard leaders were driven speedily through the still quiet streets of Bucharest to the fortress-prison at Jilava, twelve miles on the other side of the capital. Later that day they were buried, without religious rites, in one large hastily dug grave within the prison walls.

The grim news, told in stark and startling simplicity in the official account, stunned the whole country. Bucharest itself fell into a state of hushed and horrified excitement, but, when the first flush of sensation caused by the manner and extent of the massacre had passed, the mood changed into one of general relief, and, in most quarters not directly associated with opposition to the Government, of approval. It was almost universally believed that the official narrative did not reveal all the circumstances surrounding the shooting of Codreanu and his followers. The statement that they had been shot "while trying to escape" was not fully accepted. The phrase was ominously reminiscent of Nazi Germany where, since 1933, it had been given official currency as a sinister euphemism for the merciless execution of an act of vengeance against opponents, real or suspected, of the Fuehrer and his régime.

In the methods employed and the manner of their official description, it was generally agreed, the King and his Government had taken a leaf out of the Nazi book. This made the slaughter specially significant as an act of defiance to the Nazi masters of the Iron Guard. Throughout Roumania, it was realised at once that Carol had decided not to stop short of superficial expressions of disapproval of association with illegal and insurrectionary activities but had determined to stamp them out with ruthless severity, in a bold bid, once and for all, to enforce order and destroy his enemies. There was no doubt of his intention, by eradicating the Iron Guard leaders, to purge the country of malevolent foreign influences.

That the killing of Codreanu and his henchmen was intended as the major step in the King's policy to give no quarter to all terrorists, was clearly indicated by the unusually strong wording of a special Order of the Day to the entire gendarmerie, issued by the General Officer Commanding, at the same time as the official announcement of the massacre on the Bucharest-Ploesti road. The text of the Order ran:

"From the date of this order the most determined and energetic measures are to be taken instantaneously against everyone guilty

of violence. Political terrorists are to be attacked at once, without necessity of complying with the usual regulations for warning before shooting.

"No mercy should be shown in the steps taken to maintain order and authority at any price. No gendarme may show the least hesitation or weakness in carrying through this order. It must be a point of honour with every gendarme ruthlessly to suppress every attempt at violence."

The effect of these four drastic steps, following, with startling rapidity, one on the other—the dismissal of Antonescu, the arrest of Cantacuzene, the killing of Codreanu and his companions, and the Order of the Day—was instantaneous. There was an immediate cessation of terrorism. The Iron Guardists, deprived, at a stroke, of their leaders, seemed paralysed and cowed. Many of their Fascist adherents were heard to declare, "It is our June 30", a significant allusion to the day when Hitler "liquidated" without mercy those, within and without the Brown Shirt camp, whom he suspected of disputing his authority or of plotting against him.

There were many among Carol's friends and supporters who feared that his ruthless challenge to the terrorists and their Nazi associates would result in an even more violent and widespread outburst of disorder. Some even thought that, given the fury of Nazi Germany as an inevitable consequence of the Iron Guard "purge", civil war would follow as a reprisal. Nothing of the sort happened.

But to make doubly sure that nothing would be attempted and that there would be no opportunity for any kind of disorderly demonstration, the King took yet another unprecedented step. December 1 was the twentieth anniversary of the creation of Greater Roumania. Great patriotic demonstrations had been planned and prepared; it was to be a day of national rejoicing. Carol issued last minute orders cancelling everything. The Day of Celebration was heavily quiet and strangely peaceful.

CHAPTER XII

GOEBBELS GOES BIBLICAL

IN THE ROYAL PALACE at Bucharest there were no illusions that the King's wholly remarkable demonstration of power would be allowed to pass without ill consequences to the well-being of his realm. Carol invited his Ministers, advisers and friends to expect these consequences from abroad rather than at home. It was one thing, he suggested, to keep a strong hand on unruly subjects; stern discipline in the army, for the most part loyal to his throne and

person, obedience in the gendarmerie and police, prompt and stringent enforcement of the law, would, in all probability, be sufficient to secure the preservation of internal order and to maintain such a tight grip on unruly elements as would make difficult, if not impossible, a recrudescence of disaffection and traitorous unrest. It was quite another matter, Carol emphasised, to expect that Nazi Germany would let pass unheeded what had happened in Roumania and would accept quiescently his patent attempt to cut the Iron Guard link with Hitler's subversive intrusion into Roumanian affairs.

Fresh in his recollection of his personal confrontation with the Fuehrer, the King had little doubt that he would not have long to wait before the wrath of Berchtesgaden made itself felt. He was well aware that the manifestation of Nazi ire would not be a direct attack on his position and authority or upon the security and independence of his state. The time was not yet ripe for that. A too blatant blow against Carol might disclose too soon the full extent of Hitler's larger plans for European domination. "One thing at a time" was an axiom of the Nazi's creed of aggressive ruthlessness. His patience could only be exhausted by instalments in respect of one obstinately recalcitrant opponent at a time.

At the moment, the Fuehrer was heavily engaged in frowning upon Britain's feverish rearmament plans which suggested that Munich had not brought "peace in our time" after all. He was indulging in his customary outbursts of fury, "working himself up" in preparation for the grand and final assault on Czechoslovakia's independence. Yet, Nazi prestige was clearly involved in and seriously endangered by the recent events in Roumania. Moreover, Carol's policy and actions constituted an affront to the Fuehrer, personally. Since the German people had swallowed the notion that their Fuehrer was, at least, a semi-deity, such an affront amounted, as near as mattered, to sacrilege. Had he not insisted, with pointed emphasis, on his "interest" in the Roumanian Iron Guard and its leader? Carol had replied by killing his protégé and terrifying his adherents. This was defiance of Hitler; it was the unpardonable crime, to Nazi Germany the unforgivable sin; and it was not in Hitler's nature, nor in accordance with his dogmas, to overlook such a defiance.

In point of realist policy, this demonstration of "strong arm" methods on the part of the Roumanian Government raised a major issue for Nazi Germany. The *Drang nach den Osten*, "Lebensraum", mastery of the Balkans, wheat and oil, were all dependent on weakness, submission and internal disruption in Roumania. Strength, independence and authority on the part of Carol, the "königlein", were as sand in the wheels of Hitler's grandiose designs. If the Fuehrer's patience were not yet ripe for exhaustion, his impatience could hardly be contained.

Within a few days of Codreanu's death, the Nazi machine, well lubricated with Hitlerian fury, was set in motion in the usual rhythm and with the usual technique.

The Herr Doktor Clodius and his staff of "trade experts" in Roumania suddenly developed a state of excited activity. This most experienced of Hitler's manipulators of conquest through commercial blackmail of weaker states, began a series of insistent representations to the Bucharest Government, urging the immediate necessity of "readjusting" trade relations between Germany and Roumania so as to secure closer "co-operation" between the two countries. In the heavy barrage launched by Clodius against the Roumanian Government, the Nazi Minister, Herr Fabricius, took an impressive part. The first concentrated on the Ministry of Finance and Economics, the second on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—a characteristic German "pincers movement". Fabricius's task was to upset the King, through his Foreign Minister, by reminding him and emphasising that his efforts to secure aid from Britain and France had proved abortive and by insisting that Roumania could expect nothing from the democracies who had neither the will nor the means to strengthen her economic position.

Assiduously, and with typical Nazi cunning, Fabricius referred constantly, in his conversations with the Foreign Office in Bucharest, to probable threats to Roumania's security and peace by the growing clamour of Hungary for the return of her "lost province" of Transylvania and to the always imminent possibility that Russia might make demands for the restoration of Bessarabia. With crude German subtlety he suggested that, in the case of Hungary, German influence in Budapest was strong enough to restrain the ambitions of the excitable Hungarians and to deter them from pressing too far their claims against Roumania.

Fabricius did not need to say that, since the rise of Hitler and especially since his march into the Rhineland, his seizure of Austria and the success of his recent aggression against Czechoslovakia, the Hungarians had developed a progressive contempt for the Peace Treaties of 1919 and for the Western Powers which had imposed them on the defeated Central European states. Under Nazi tuition, that contempt had now reached the stage of arrogant defiance of and open menace against Hungary's neighbours who had benefited from these Treaties. Grown bold through the certainty of Nazi aid, the Hungarian reactionaries, the feudal barons whose delights were found not in their Transylvanian estates but in the night clubs of Budapest, and other pro-Nazi political adventurers, were now loudly trumpeting their demands against Roumania. They were discovering "wrongs that must be redressed" and "suffering" among the Hungarian population of Transylvania at the hands of "cruel Roumanian oppressors". They did not stress the point that the return of this rich province would mean the restoration

of great estates to the Hungarian landed gentry from whom Hitler drew his most enthusiastic and devoted supporters and who were in authority in Budapest.

It was sufficient for Fabricius to emphasise, in the Roumanian Foreign Office, that this was the situation in Hungary and that it was in the power of Nazi Germany to "do something about it". Would it not be well, therefore, that Roumania should be sure of German friendship? Would it not be "in the interests" of both countries to co-operate for their mutual benefit, at least in the innocuous field of trade relations? Germany, insinuated Herr Fabricius, had "no territorial demands" affecting Roumania, nor, indeed, against any Balkan state. But, he suggested, should Hungary become restive and evince an intention to march against Roumania "to redress one of the great wrongs of Versailles", it would be difficult for Germany, not only to restrain Hungary, but, considering the close relations between the two nations, to withhold from her German sympathy and even support. And Hungary, Herr Fabricius pointed out, had joined the Fascist-Nazi Anti-Comintern Pact which virtually, if not in fact, brought her within the Berlin-Rome Axis.

In his conversations with the Roumanian Foreign Minister on the subject of Russia, Fabricius was much less subtle. There could be no doubt, he insisted, that sooner or later, the Soviet Union would commit an aggression against Roumania with the purpose of seizing Bessarabia and North Bukovina. Against the might of Russia, would not Roumania be powerless? How could Roumania hope to withstand the mechanised armies and the air force of the Bolsheviks? Roumanian interests demanded resistance against the encroachment of Communism into the Balkans. Apart from the powerlessness of Roumania in face of a Soviet infringement of her sovereignty, this was a European matter of the first importance. It was obvious, therefore, that Roumania, having a common interest with Germany in preventing the spread of international Bolshevism, should seek to establish the closest relations with the one power in Europe which was strong enough to meet and destroy it. Germany was offering the basis for these closer relations and, when the time came, Roumania could be assured of German aid in the field and in the air.

In all his discussions, Fabricius adopted the mask of amity, but King Carol himself, and his political advisers, could not misunderstand the note of hostility and menace that underlay the Nazi Minister's diplomatic suavity. There could certainly be no mistaking the import of his references to Germany's "interest" in the 800,000 German Nationals in King Carol's realm and whose "special rights" Roumania had already recognised.

Over at the Ministry of Finance and Economics, the Herr Doktor Clodius pressed hard for his trade treaty with Roumania. He

asked for a better exchange rate to facilitate German-Roumanian commerce—a reduction in the number of lei to the mark to enable Germany to buy Roumania's exports and an increase in the rate to help German manufacturers sell their products in Roumania. He pressed for a substantial increase in the supply of Roumanian oil and wheat to Germany. He suggested that Germany would be prepared to assist Roumania's industrial and agricultural economy by supplying experts and technicians. Germany proposed, also, to aid in the reorganisation of Roumania's civil and military aviation services.

The Nazi diplomatic-commercial "pincers movement" did not succeed. Some members of the Roumanian Government were disposed to compromise by yielding a part of the Nazi proposals, chiefly a "token" increase in oil deliveries to Germany. But King Carol declined to sanction any concession which might suggest a weakening on his part. Nor was he willing to make any move in the direction of Germany which might disturb the cordial relations he had established with Britain and France and which he was anxious to maintain, notwithstanding his grievous disappointment with their failure to give practical effect to them. He was, at this time, full of fight and strong in the sense of power following the success of his measures against the Nazi-infected and suborned disturbers of Roumania's internal peace. He felt disposed to continue that success in the wider field of foreign affairs and he still hoped that, in the event of matters reaching a crisis with Hitler, he would receive the support and aid of the Western democracies.

Although the negotiations with Clodius and Fabricius were conducted by his Ministers, they were directed by the King himself and the decisions were his. His instructions were definite and emphatic—amicable relations but no surrender. Both the Nazi Minister and the Trade Envoy were obliged to report to Berlin that there seemed little possibility of making headway and that the failure of their efforts was due to the intransigent attitude of the King.

The repercussion in Germany was immediate and unmistakable. The situation was now comparable with the development of the fabricated Sudeten trouble between Germany and Czechoslovakia. Nazi methods of dealing with Roumania followed the familiar lines which, in the case of Austria and Czechoslovakia, had been so effective in upsetting national and international nerves and had, at last, led to the betrayal and disruption of these States. The Goebbels propaganda machine was geared to concert pitch and well primed with the raw material for the mass production of slander and abuse against Carol and Roumania.

On the fourteenth day after Carol's meeting with Hitler, the entire Press of Nazi Germany poured forth a simultaneous torrent of vulgarity and minatory scurrility against the Roumanian

monarch, his Ministers and entourage. The intensity of this organised expression of Hitler's fury was even greater than that directed by the poison-squirting Goebbels against President Benes, in the days immediately preceding his enforced surrender of the Sudetenland to the Fuehrer at Munich.

The physically deformed and mentally twisted Nazi Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment found, in Carol's personal and political career, ample material out of which he could indulge his skill for distortion and falsehood. The amatory adventures of the youthful Crown Prince Carol, his conflicts with the Roumanian political factions, his feuds with and suppression of the Iron Guard, the slaughter of its leaders, his close interest in Roumania's industry, his patent predilection for the "pluto-democracies" and, above all, his preference for the association with the so-called "Jewess Lupescu"—all these were rich grist to the Nazi slander mill.

At the behest of his master, Goebbels made full use of this material to launch the most virulent attacks impugning Carol's morals, patriotism and service to his country. His ruthless measures to crush the Iron Guard were represented as the callous persecution of patriots and a provocation of high-minded citizens whose sole purpose was the purification and welfare of their country. Goebbels' scandal sheets inserted into this context the theme that the evil ways of a royal libertine were corruptive of the noble Roumanian standards of conduct of which the Iron Guardists were the most impeccable exponents; they were portrayed as guarding jealously the purity of an immaculately moral, religious people.

In this connection, the Nazi teleprinters cunningly interspersed their narratives with references to those political leaders in Roumania who had, at one time or another, fallen foul of their King. There was fulsome flattery of men like the National Peasant Iuliu Maniu and the Liberal leader Bratianu whose conditions for participating in the government of their country Carol had so often declined to accept and who, therefore, brooded and grew angry in the cold corridors of political unemployment. The Nazi suggestion was that the disciples of Codreanu, the National Peasants, and the various liberal parties were all one large unhappy family of true Roumanian loyalists united through a common frustration of their desire to serve the nation on the part of an unscrupulous monarch obsessed by delusions of grandeur and motivated by reckless self-interest and greed.

Goebbels' scribes did not hesitate to level against Carol the most extravagant accusations of corruption and malpractice in the conduct of the Roumanian state finances and commercial enterprises. In this respect, however, the Nazi propagandists magnanimously offered the suggestion, in mitigation of the King's alleged offences, that he was, probably, the tool, though a willing one, of more expert corrupters rather than the originator of many crimes

against the State. This permitted Goebbels to indulge in violently extravagant diatribes on the most favoured theme and the best cultivated obsession in the whole farrago of Hitler's "philosophy" of hate—the Jews.

As a means towards incitement to unrest and disaffection, Nazidom had found anti-Jewish sentiment to have no equal. In Germany, Goebbels had demonstrated this beyond any shadow of doubt. Flogging the Jewish dog had not only been easy; it had been proved most popular in the early days of the Nazi bid for power; it had brought, in Germany, the first rush of sympathisers with the Brown Shirt Party. To ascribe every German ill to the "Jewish menace" had appealed, instantaneously, to the disaffected German, and the anti-semitic net caught many and variedly assorted fish.

In every phase of German life, as elsewhere, some individual or individuals of Jewish birth or origin could be found as a convenient illustration of "Jewish domination". Nazi philosophy had not the smallest compunction or difficulty in finding, in the mere presence of men and women of Jewish blood, unassailable evidence of the root cause of Germany's troubles. In accordance with Nazi propaganda practice, the story was repeated so often that it came to acquire axiomatic truth in the Nazi mind. Germans with a sense of grievance—and, in one form or another, most Germans convinced themselves of a grievance—believed that there was "something in it", at least. Many, avid for scapegoats, eagerly accepted the Nazi "facts" and drew the desired Nazi conclusions from them. To satisfy the pseudo-intellectuals, of whom Germany has produced more than any other nation, the Nazis promoted Jew hatred to the level of a philosophy. Alfred Rosenberg, the dark-haired Balt, obligingly obeyed the Fuehrer's orders and invented the "blond Aryan race theory" nonsense, garnished with all the turgidity beloved by German Kultur.

In the hands of Rosenberg, anti-semitism became a characteristically Teutonic quack-science; Hitler's sinister genius turned it to political account by making Jew-baiting an instrument of national and international policy; Goebbels translated it into a diabolically effective method of rousing the basest passions of hate and disaffection and of sowing discord, an essential prerequisite of Nazi advancement to political power and of the accomplishment of its "master race" ambitions.

In the case of Roumania and King Carol, Goebbels had a superb opportunity to demonstrate his perverted talents. Ten years' experience as Hitler's supreme disseminator of calumny and hatred had made him master of every trick and twist of this iniquitous profession. Since he had made the science of Jew-baiting with the poison pen his speciality, he found no difficulty in applying his evil genius to the peculiar conditions prevailing in Roumania

where, for many decades, the "problem" of the Jews had been raised to a front rank political issue.

Political adventurers had assiduously exploited the existence of some three-quarters of a million Jews among a backward and ill-developed peasant people as a convenient stepping-stone to place and power. Long before Hitler had been even heard of, anti-semitism had been adopted as a political creed in Roumania, and, after his advent, its protagonists claimed boastfully to have been its originators and to have taught it to the Nazi Fuehrer. All the economic deficiencies of Roumania were ascribed to the "domination" of the Jewish minority, invariably pictured as crafty and rich, though, in fact, the vast majority of Jews were poverty-stricken and miserable. All the political shortcomings were laid at the door of "Jewish unscrupulousness".

Arch-exploiters of this facile doctrine were the Iron Guard. They saw to it that the Jewish question was never allowed to remain in the background of Roumanian affairs. At every election they placed it in the forefront of the political struggle. They created one Jewish "crisis" after another by fomenting riot and disorder whose persistent feature was physical attack upon the Jews and the destruction of their goods, property and places of worship—the pogrom. In this manifestation of Roumanian anti-semitism, the Iron Guard was the exclusive and regular practitioner but, on the doctrinal side, most of the other political factions, particularly those in opposition to the King, took a share, some wholeheartedly, others with reticence. Whatever the degree of their subscription to the creed of anti-semitism, all the dissident elements in Roumanian politics shared one common ground for the exhibition of their hostility towards King Carol—Madame Lupescu.

Out of all this Goebbels created a superb picture of the Roumanian nation torn by disaffection and rent by malevolent anti-national influences undermining the state for their own unscrupulous advantage. His newspapers printed a series of articles and stories depicting, in lurid phrase and under sensational headlines, the stranglehold of "the Roumanian branch of International Jewry" plotting insidiously against the welfare of the Roumanian people. Goebbels' scribes told how the chief plotter and representative of this "world-wide Jewish conspiracy" was the woman Lupescu, whose physical wiles had ensnared the King and whose intellectual acumen had enriched him and her Jewish accomplices at the expense of the sorely-pressed Roumanian people.

Photographs, cleverly retouched, were published throughout the German Press representing this intimate "friend and adviser" of King Carol in the most vulgarly conceived suggestion of Jewish physical characteristics—swarthy features, narrow eyes and aquiline nose. In truth, these delineations were not only a malicious caricature, they were an unscrupulous forgery of the portraits of a

singularly beautiful woman, whose most striking features were her unusually delicate colouring, golden-bronze hair and large greenish eyes, the antithesis of the universal notion of a daughter of the Hebrew race. Captions and narrative attached to these pictures told of her Ghetto birth in the most squalid circumstances, of her climb to eminence in the Royal Court through cunning, subterfuge and the exercise of unsavoury talents. This was the woman, the Goebbels' scandal sheets proclaimed in heavy type, who had destroyed the King of Roumania, and, by reason of her ascendancy over him, was despoiling his people and ruining his state, in the interests and at the behest of "the international, criminal Jewish clique".

As usual in the Nazi propaganda of subversion, Goebbels did not scruple about consistency in his scurrilities with regard to Lupescu. Some of his "stories" represented her as the instrument of "capitalist profit-mongers, concessionaires and exploiters"; others contained plausible tales calculated to show that she was the agent of "international Bolshevism". Contradiction of this kind never worried the Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment. Hitler had laid down, in *Mein Kampf*, his fundamental principle of good political tactics and propaganda—the bigger the lie, the more easy its acceptance, the more effective its result.

To add colour to his Portrait of Lupescu and to underline his theme of "the wicked Jewess", Goebbels caused to be inserted in his newspapers, with appropriate "copy", pictures purporting to be actual photographs of her father. In these, he was given the appearance of a singularly ugly individual with every Jewish feature accentuated to an extent that produced an effect of exceptional repulsiveness. This was an even more unscrupulous and criminal fabrication than the crudely forged photographs of the daughter, since there were no pictures of her father in existence. Throughout the long period of modern Roumanian anti-semitism, Lupescu's Iron Guardist enemies had scoured the country and ransacked every possible source for material to discredit and slander her, but they had not succeeded in discovering a photograph of her male parent. But the Herr Doktor Goebbels' efficient research experts in the Nazi Department of Fabrication had, on his instructions, been fortunate enough to discover this important and hitherto missing link in her life story, in order to complete the case against Carol's closest friend.

Goebbels reserved for his own newspaper *Angriff* an exclusive piece of propaganda designed to summarise the whole indictment against Carol as the willing victim of Jewish machinations, and to serve as a warning of the evil consequences likely to befall him should he continue his association with the Jewish favourite. Goebbels re-wrote the Book of Esther, the legendary history of the Persian King Ahasuerus and his Jewish Queen Esther and gave it the headline "History of a King and his Jewish Friend".

He told a fanciful and imaginative story of a Jewish conspiracy to destroy the great Kingdom of Persia and of the crafty Jewish plan to insinuate the alluring Jewess Esther, depicted as a wanton, into the affections of a licentious old monarch. The Jewish plotters, having succeeded in beguiling the bemused and infatuated monarch into raising this daughter of Judah to share his throne, the story went on, the wily Esther, suddenly maturing as a kind of precocious female "Elder of Zion", began the process of encompassing the downfall of Ahasuerus.

While professing affection for her royal consort, the narrative related, the Jewess secretly executed the fiendish design of perverting and suborning the king's most trusted friends and counsellors to turn, with treasonable intent, against him. In the end, according to Goebbels' version of the tale, Esther's cunning, exercised without scrupulous regard for the chastity incumbent on a royal consort, overcame the loyalty even of the personal bodyguard of the king, men chosen as the most faithful of his subjects and sworn to defend him to the death.

There could be only one result of so sordid a betrayal of the royal house of Persia to the infamous plottings of Israel, Goebbels' story moralised. Bewitched and debased by "the Jewish courtesan", the men of this *élite* bodyguard, the protectors of the sovereign's sacred person, themselves assassinated poor King Ahasuerus.

How the Jews were to benefit from the murder of so precious and valuable an ally in their scheming to control the Persian realm for behoof of the Israelites, Goebbels did not trouble to specify. Nor did he give any explanation of his story to indicate to the uninquiring reader that his account of the Ahasuerus legend was not all in accordance with the story as told in the original Book of Esther. On the contrary, he let it be understood that he was merely re-telling, without any gloss, the narrative of a historical Jewish episode, as written by the Jews themselves. Moreover, it would hardly have suited Goebbels' purpose to tell his readers that most experts in the field of Jewish and Persian history have held the Esther-Ahasuerus story to be largely fictional, or, at least, to be based on the slenderest historical evidence.

He left his readers no room for doubt as to the appositeness of the "History of a King and his Jewish Friend" in relation to the situation at the Roumanian royal court. If there were any such doubt, Goebbels took good care to remove it, by having the story printed in close proximity to photographs of King Carol and Lupescu and to accounts of events in Roumania with which she was alleged to have been connected. These episodes were carefully selected, edited and "twisted" to point the moral, to all patriotic Roumanians, that the presence of this modern Esther in the Royal Palace in Bucharest was injurious to the welfare of their country and could only result in disaster.

The unprecedented calumnies of the Goebbels' printing presses were designed not merely to express the Fuehrer's rage against the truculent resistance to his policies on the part of the Roumanian monarch; their unconcealed purpose was to encourage the suppressed Iron Guardists to seek vengeance for the death of their leaders, to urge the cohesion of the Iron Guard organisation, driven underground, with the other factions opposing the King, and to incite a rebellious uprising against him and his entourage.

This became clear from the fact that Hitler's anti-Carol propaganda was not reserved for German consumption alone. The Nazi radio stations extended their broadcasts to Roumania and, in the Roumanian tongue, repeated the outpourings of the German newspapers and indulged in furious vituperation against Carol and his friends. Many thousands of copies of Nazi newspapers, and reprints of the articles which appeared in them, were smuggled into Roumania and distributed, despite the rigorous censorship imposed by Carol's government and the embargo on the admission into Roumania of German printed propaganda matter.

Bearing in mind the similarity of this situation with that which had preceded the seizure of Austria and the more recent upheaval in Czechoslovakia, Carol and his advisers realised that relations with Berlin were assuming a highly dangerous aspect and that, unless resolutely checked by means additional to the continued repression of the Iron Guard, internal disaffection might suddenly emerge in some new, Nazi-inspired form.

On the night of December 14, Carol summoned an Emergency Crown Council to the Royal Palace and, characteristically, urged it to adopt a double-edged policy. Having regard to the weakness of Roumania's defences and to the instability of her internal economy, he suggested a further attempt to enlist the aid of Britain and France, who, he thought, might now be more practically sympathetic, in the light of Germany's now patent hostility to Roumania and the growing evidence of Hitler's aggressive intentions against her and in the wider European field of his *Lebensraum*. At the same time, he considered it desirable to ward off Hitler, for the time being at any rate, and to give the western democracies the opportunity of formulating measures to strengthen Roumania's position.

The Crown Council decided to send to Paris, as Ambassador, Roumania's best known political friend of Britain and France, Georges Tatarascu. In the hope of putting a stop to Nazi propaganda against Roumania, and of effecting an improvement in German-Roumanian relations, the Germanophile former Premier, Alexander Vaida-Voivod, was sent as Ambassador to Berlin. This was intended as a gesture of appeasement, the popular political device for retreating before Hitler, practised by the best powers in Europe, at this time.

Next day it was announced that the government had decided

upon the formation of a new "Party of National Regeneration", a fusion of all political parties into one "National Renaissance Front". There was no specific abolition of the former political factions, but, by clear and unmistakable inference, they ceased to exist. Henceforth, Roumania was to be a One Party State whose principal members were to be nominated and whose purpose was to be "the Defence of the Fatherland". The leader of the new Single Party was King Carol. Elections would be held, it was stated, but only candidates approved by the Single Party leaders and declaring allegiance to it, would be permitted to seek the votes of the electors.

When the "elections" did take place, a fortnight later, they were strictly controlled by the new officials, all adherents of the New Party, in the electoral centres where they had been appointed to replace those whose loyalty to the King was suspect. Three and a half million men and women joined the New Party by voting for its candidates. It was an almost unanimous vote of the qualified electorate, but, of course, there were no alternative candidates for whom they could express their preference and the local officials saw to it that the voting was "right". Carefully selected units of the army and the gendarmerie also took a part in securing that the elections proceeded undisturbed. Their presence in the immediate vicinity of the polling booths, doubtless persuaded any wavering electors about the wisdom of marking their ballot papers favourably to the One Party candidates.

Roumania thus became a corporative state, on the Italian model. The National Renaissance Front was quite blatantly the King's Party. By this "unification" of the party system Carol gave legal sanction to the virtual dictatorship which had long characterised his direction of the state. He disclaimed, however, any intention to impose on the country a government modelled on Fascist lines or based on Fascist ideas. The party of National Renaissance, he insisted, was purely Roumanian in character and purpose and was born out of the exigencies of the time and designed to cleanse the state of the corruptions that had infected it. In substance and effect, of course, it was an act of consolidation for political defence against Hitler.

The Prime Minister, Armand Calinescu, undoubtedly voicing the views of King Carol, emphasised, in a broadcast speech on January 11, 1939, the meaning of the new One Party State:

"Whenever a general union was called for, it could never be realised. Many a time, the sovereign of this country, with that clear-sightedness of his for the future, feeling it his duty to the country, had to call the politicians and political parties to return to reality. Undoubtedly, in this respect, the King can have a clear conscience in future history.

“Two predominant features were characteristic of the old system—the call to all that divided, to all that dissipated strength and to all that deepened hatred, and, secondly, the discrediting of other men and the lowering of every moral standard. Is there anyone who does not remember overflow of passions? Each man sought to destroy his fellow. Respect for parents no longer existed and brotherly love was dead. Families rushed one against the other. Life in the villages became impossible and this condition came about under the name of ‘politics’.”

Calinescu denied any similarity with any foreign system:

“What is this National Regeneration Party? I would like to emphasise that it is purely Roumanian. He who tries to find any similarity with any foreign system will search in vain. Whoever seeks for its inspiration outside of Roumania will not find it. Of course, there may be, here and there, some similarity in the small details, but no human mind can now create types of perfect originality in political matters.”

The Prime Minister indicated, however, in cautious phrases that the aims of the National Regeneration Party were wider than mere internal “unity” and that its creation was intended as a measure of defence against foreign encroachment.

“The boundaries of the Roumanian State are the boundaries of the Roumanian Nation. They are not traced according to any convention nor can they be assigned by any treaty. They are indicated only by history and natural rights. It stands to reason that we shall defend them to the utmost, as a sacred patrimony handed down to us. The Party of National Renaissance is not a political party in the old meaning of the word. It is a movement. This ‘Party’ does not represent the interests of a certain group of persons, nor of any social class, but it represents the collective interests of the Country and of the Nation. Many a danger may lie in wait for us. In view of the danger, no matter how remote, we must be prepared to awake all our national energies and hastily regain our lost time. The watchword of the Party of National Renaissance must be: ‘Defence of the Fatherland’.”

For a brief period, Carol’s measures bore satisfactory fruit. Internally, Roumania was well under his control and there was little or no sign that subversive elements were capable of showing their hand. At all events, there was no overt indication of opposition and the country took the suppression of the political factions quietly. Abroad, the response was moderately good. In London and Paris there were gestures of approval of his renewed demonstrations of strength in face of Hitler’s wrath. But there was still nothing in the

way of offers of active assistance in the event of further trouble: there were only the usual adjurations to "remain firm".

In Germany, the propaganda campaign against Carol was dropped as suddenly as it had begun. As events subsequently showed, this was due to no new-found affection for Carol, or to any change of Hitler's attitude towards him. The reason was to be found in the immediate necessities and direction of Hitler's ambitions. He was engaged in the preparations for the final aggression against Czechoslovakia. True to his creed of "one victim at a time", he elected, for the moment, to continue his pursuit of Carol by the more gentle paths of "peaceful persuasion", the re-opening of his trade offensive to secure Roumania's wheat and oil, and to tie her economically to Germany as the prelude to Carol's political destruction. The Fuehrer instructed the wily Herr Doktor Clodius to resume operations in Bucharest.

CHAPTER XIII

GUARANTEE WITHOUT SECURITY

THE YEAR 1939 opened calmly enough for Roumania. King Carol's Single Party system had been successfully imposed on the nation and had aroused no active opposition. There were some murmurs of dissent, but such dissatisfaction was expressed rather timidly and in cautious terms. This, in itself, was a tribute to the purposefulness of Carol's acts, but, with the exception of the Iron Guardists and their more or less avowed partisans, most Roumanians discerned and accepted the fact that he was throwing up defences against the possibility of Nazi aggression, rather than simply revolutionising the internal political and economic structure of Roumania. Realising this, opponents of the new régime were constrained to temper their hostility which had, in fact, been countered in advance when Carol offered the leaders of all parties, other than the Iron Guard, participation in the National Renaissance Front. The National Peasant Party leader, Juliu Maniu, and men like Istrate Micescu, the discredited Foreign Minister of the Goga régime, the Liberal leader, Dinu Bratianu, declined the King's offer, but they based their refusal, not on objection to the principle underlying the new system of government, but on the restricted ground that it concentrated too much power in the hands of the King.

Maniu and Bratianu, with thirty other former Ministers, put their dissent "on record" by presenting a memorandum to the King criticising the new Single Party régime. They refused to recognise the dissolution of the political parties and, in expressing regret that

Carol had not invited the leaders of all the old political parties to confer with him prior to his creation of the Single Party State, suggested the formation of a "Government of National Union and National Faith". The memorandum was a kind of political afterthought; it was not presented until the Single Party had been installed for nearly three months in power. When danger from Nazi Germany approached Roumania's frontiers, Maniu and the rest of the opposition to the Single Party State were able, therefore, to maintain that their attitude was merely a logical consequence of their long-held political principles, and that there was nothing in it from which the enemies of Roumania could derive comfort or assurance of support, in the event of danger from abroad.

Outwardly, everything was quiet. It was noticed, however, that the German colony in Bucharest was being heavily reinforced. The air service from Berlin brought a steady stream of "trade experts" to augment the staff of Herr Clodius' economic mission which now numbered many scores. The personnel of the German Legation in the Calea Victorei overflowed into the best hotels; hundreds of Germans carrying credentials labelling them as journalists, commercial travellers for pompously named firms, known and unknown, representatives of a multitude of banks and finance corporations, thronged Bucharest. Most of them could be seen, at one time or another, at the great block of offices of Herr Clodius at the back of the Legation, or at the Legation itself. In both places their identity appeared to be well known. An unusual number of German visitors, liberally supplied with money, became noticeable in the streets and popular resorts of the capital and the larger towns. The Fifth Column were taking up their stations.

Most conspicuous among this bizarre concourse of German visitors who took up residence in Bucharest was Edith von Kohler, sometimes described as "Baroness", sometimes as a simple "Frau". She had appeared in the Roumanian capital a year before, complete with official credentials from the Wilhelmstrasse as "Investigator of the German Department of Agriculture". Frau Kohler was middle-aged, handsome and of distinguished bearing. Her manners were elegant and polished. She dressed in the cut and style of the Rue de la Paix. Her conversation was smart, intelligent and ultra-modern. She was an obvious product of the salons of the smart set and there was nothing about her to suggest anything more than a distant and rare acquaintance with the farms of Germany and the problems of the German agricultural labourer.

At this time, Frau Kohler moved cautiously and unobtrusively in Roumanian society where her charm and elegance gained her many friends. She appeared to concentrate her social connections in the homes of the higher placed and more affluent officers of the Roumanian Army, especially those with political associations. She attracted the attention of Dimitri Dimancescu, for many years

Press Attaché of the Roumanian Legation in London, who had been brought back recently to Bucharest by King Carol, to undertake, as Director General of Propaganda, the task of counteracting the growingly intensive and obnoxious German propaganda which had aroused the King's distaste and alarm.

Dimancescu had never concealed his passionate friendship for Britain; his record as one of the foremost protagonists of Anglo-Roumanian collaboration was his chief qualification for the post of Director General of Propaganda in Bucharest which Carol created specially to secure his services in Roumania. Dimancescu became suspicious of Frau Kohler's activities. His doubts were intensified by the fact that this elegant "Investigator of the German Department of Agriculture" allowed it to be known, with becoming modesty, that she was a cousin of Heinrich Himmler, Chief of the Nazi Gestapo. Dimancescu's inquiries revealed that Frau Kohler was, in fact, a Gestapo agent and that her credentials as an agricultural expert were "cover" for simple espionage. When she became aware that Dimancescu was taking a special interest in her, Frau Kohler boldly essayed to seek his acquaintance. He not only declined to meet her, but pointedly snubbed her, when chance or design brought them together in the salons of Bucharest. Dimancescu also took measures to block her further advance into influential social and political circles. So effective were these measures that Frau Kohler soon found herself suspect and so embarrassed that she was obliged to leave Bucharest as unobtrusively as she had entered. She returned to Berlin.

Her departure was quickly followed by marks of German displeasure with the author of her discomfiture. A few days after Frau Kohler left Roumania, Herr Fabricius and the Italian Minister in Bucharest put pressure on the Roumanian Government to dismiss Dimancescu on the ground that he was an enemy of The Axis. In support of this, the German Minister produced to M. Petrescu-Comnen, the Foreign Minister, the text of a speech made by Dimancescu to a private gathering in San Francisco in 1936, when he had criticised Nazi complaints of "encirclement" by the European democracies. Fabricius and his Italian colleague stated, on behalf of their governments, that if Dimancescu were not removed from his office, Berlin and Rome would regard this refusal as an unfriendly act. At the same time, German and Italian journalists were instructed to add emphasis to this diplomatic *démarche* by ostentatiously absenting themselves from any press gatherings at which Dimancescu was present.

Carol, who had personally appointed Dimancescu, described, in private, the demands for his nominee's dismissal as "impertinent diplomatic action", but he felt unwilling to make an international issue of a comparatively minor matter. His reply was to send him back to London, but to express his displeasure at the "impertinence"

Carol gave Dimancescu the appointment of Chief of Press Services at the Roumanian Legation. This was a new and important post and technically carried the rank of Minister. Dimancescu's dismissal in Bucharest by promotion in London was duly noted in the Wilhelmstrasse and the Germans, with the Italians, continued to exert pressure for proper punishment; they insisted on the removal of this "enemy of Germany" from so responsible a political post. Carol again made a pretence of yielding; he transferred Dimancescu to the diplomatic service with the rank of Counsellor in Charge of Press Services, in which capacity he carried on his work in London. The Nazis thereupon gave up the pursuit.

Edith von Kohler reappeared in Bucharest in January, 1939. The Roumanian authorities noted that she had now abandoned her bucolic interests. She was no longer an "Investigator of the German Department of Agriculture"; her new credentials described her as "Cultural Envoy". The duties covered by this unusual description were unspecified, but, in the light of her subsequent activities, her rôle was that of quasi-official hostess at the German Legation in the Calea Victoriei. Both officially and unofficially, the Germans launched an intensive campaign of propaganda by hospitality, the opulence of which was unprecedented even in so lavishly social a capital as Bucharest, always noted for the luxury and extravagance of its entertaining.

The campaign was evidently designed to cover all the worthwhile sections of Roumanian society; it was devised and planned with characteristic German thoroughness. There were two central headquarters. Herr Fabricius presided at the Legation where, at sumptuous and frequent but select parties, State officials of the higher ranks and the most important political personalities were fêted. At the Athenée Palace Hotel, where she had installed herself in the most expensive suites, Frau Kohler entertained, at smart cocktail parties and *recherché* meals, the intelligentsia, the socially eminent and the lesser fry of Bucharest society.

At her cocktail parties and receptions Germany's "Cultural Envoy" moved almost regally among and talked smartly and charmingly to her guests, who rarely numbered less than two hundred. She aroused admiration as well as envy in Bucharest when she drove conspicuously through the streets in her unusually large and brightly-coloured Mercedes-Benz supercharged motor car, adorned blatantly with an outsized swastika flag on the bonnet. Taxi-drivers complained that they were unable to discharge their passengers at the Athenée Palace Hotel whenever Frau Kohler was in residence or "receiving". The huge Mercedes-Benz invariably, and with deliberate arrogance, blocked the entrance.

Hitler's "Cultural Envoy" became the dazzling central figure of the Bucharest social whirl. She was the welcome, usually the principal and always the much sought after guest of the social *élite*.

Wherever she went, either receiving or dispensing elegant hospitality, there was almost certain to be a politician, an army officer, a writer or a good conversationalist whom she could charm with her wit and graceful manner and to whom she could express, in a serious moment, the affinity between her Fatherland and the delightful—and rich—country of the charming Roumanians. There were opportunities, too, for extolling, in a charmingly feminine way, the excellences of the robust, and entirely new ideas which, in six short years, had transformed the craven, dispirited, humiliated people of “pluto-democratic” Germany into the virile, proud nation of the Aryan National Socialist Third Reich.

Discreetly, the “Cultural Envoy” would expatiate upon the political-philosophic principles of the Nazi faith by which this miracle had been accomplished. No selfish motives, Frau Kohler suggested, guided the great man who was leading Germany to the magnificent destiny of which the world had seen only the beginning. The German miracle was not intended to be a jealously guarded proprietary patent; the German Fuehrer had a great vision and a beneficent purpose—to extend the blessings of the New German World beyond the frontiers of the Third Reich and to share them with all peoples, especially those who suffered tyrannies and repressions. Frau Kohler, with becoming tact, never directly suggested that her Roumanian friends might be in any such plight, but her frankness and engaging charm encouraged many Roumanians to confide to her that there were causes for dissatisfaction in their own country and anxieties to remove them.

In this way, she gleaned much interesting information about the cross-currents of Roumanian politics and the less publicised movements and policies of the country's leaders. No doubt at all that the rôle of Frau Kohler was, in Bucharest, that in which Herr Otto Abetz distinguished himself in Paris—the Fifth Column dispenser of disruption, the receiver and transmitter of information on behalf of Himmler's espionage service. In short, Frau Kohler was a spy. Her path was rendered easy by the complete absence of competition in her particular form of activity. Bucharest noted the shy frugality of the British Legation in its gloomy mansion almost hidden away in a courtyard off the Strada Jules Michelet, and contrasted it with the munificence and prodigality of the Nazi diplomatic and trade headquarters. British diplomats did not even frown on the cocktail and the caviare sandwich as an unorthodox device in the pursuit of diplomacy; they simply declined to take notice of the method or of the strange people who practised it. The grand banquet de luxe was a thing almost unknown in British diplomatic circles. It did not seem to matter that the Roumanians were eager seekers after social pleasures and the delights of a good table, with sparkling conversation, and that sybaritic indulgences appealed to them. British Embassies and Legations simply did not

go in for these things and, in Bucharest, as elsewhere, the social side of diplomacy was for the most part confined to tea and toast, with buns, in the afternoon and an occasional, very select, and discreet dinner party of an evening to mark a special event. At any rate, the "country squire" formula was consistent with the general British attitude to Roumanian affairs, at this time—an attitude of patronising objectiveness; Roumania was still, in British eyes, a distant and comparatively unimportant Balkan state. The Nazis did not think so. The triumvirate, Fabricius at the Legation, Clodius at the Economic Mission and Frau Kohler at the Athenée Palace Hotel, "covered", between them, all who were likely to be of service to the Third Reich.

In the early days of the new year, Herr Clodius resumed the work that had been suspended in December. Through Herr Fabricius, the Roumanian Foreign Minister Grigore Gafencu was informed that Germany was prepared, once more, to attempt to find a basis for economic "collaboration" with Roumania. Herr Clodius and the members of his mission were ready with new proposals for an advantageous exchange of Roumania's oil and wheat for Germany's manufactured products. Germany was in a position to buy, at better prices than could be obtained elsewhere, all the Roumanian wheat and oil, over and above what was required for internal consumption. This comparatively small matter could be arranged, it was represented, within the text of a broad trade pact between the two countries, covering the whole field of German-Roumanian commercial relations.

The Nazi representations were couched in the most courteous terms. In the verbal encounters with Gafencu and Mititza Constantinescu, Minister of Finance and National Economy, the manner of the Nazi diplomatic and trade envoys was suave and friendly, even conciliatory. They insinuated the intention to "let bygones be bygones" and, by suggestion rather than direct statement, conveyed the German Government's desire to regard the recent strained relations with Roumania as an unfortunate episode which had unnecessarily interfered with the natural friendship between the two countries. That episode could, it was suggested, not only be forgotten, but any ill effects resulting from it could be remedied by a simple commercial *rapprochement*. The Roumanians were polite but non-committal.

As the *pourparlers* proceeded without positive progress, a note of insistence intruded itself and, as the talks and written representations developed, the tone of the Germans hardened. Although Fabricius and Clodius were apparently careful to avoid anything in the way of menaces, there was no doubt in the minds of the Roumanians that this was a matter of tactics rather than of policy. Carol was watching closely the signs that pointed clearly to a further Nazi encroachment on Czechoslovakia. Hitler was complaining of

the "lack of order" in the Republic and of the failure of the government of old President Hacha to suppress anti-German sentiment. Goebbels had switched his radio from the Roumanian to the Czechoslovakian wavelength and his press was heavily headlined with the iniquities of the "communist-pluto-democratic-Jewish" factions which were again trying the patience of the generous-hearted Fuehrer who, despite the acutest provocation, had tempered his wrath at Munich.

Preoccupation with preparations for the final and complete seizure of Czechoslovakia were, without doubt, the reason for the Nazi soft pedal on Roumania, but Carol and his Ministers were not deceived by the sweet reasonableness of the Fuehrer's envoys. They could not fail to observe that, as the days passed, the sweetness and the reasonableness diminished. The gradations coincided with the stages of the preliminaries for the new aggression in Central Europe. In Hitler's estimate, the Czechoslovakian episode was likely to be over quickly and the task accomplished without difficulty. It was only a matter of organisation for the "moving in". As soon as that organisation was set in train he was ready for the next step towards the mastery of Europe. He planned well ahead and Carol knew that the turn of Roumania could not be far away.

The hardening tones of Clodius and Fabricius indicated this quite clearly. Carol resolved, therefore, to attempt to checkmate them by renewing his efforts to find aid in the west. He was ably assisted in this policy by Constantinescu who was given the leading rôle, on the Roumanian side, in the negotiations with the Germans. This Minister had three major qualifications which made him a doughty adversary in the contests with Clodius, in particular. He was an able financier and Governor of the Bank of Roumania. He was by profession a lawyer, one of the most astute in Roumania. He was strongly pro-British. With him in control of the Roumanian case, the negotiations did not proceed at all to the satisfaction of the Nazis. Indeed, they went badly, for the Roumanians refused to make any worth-while concessions to the Germans and Constantinescu succeeded adroitly in keeping the proceedings in being and holding the Germans at arm's length without giving them sufficient cause to break off negotiations. This he did by meeting proposal with counter-proposal requiring consideration in Bucharest and reference to Berlin.

During the course of these negotiations, Carol appointed Viorel Virgil Tilea as Minister in London. Tilea was one of the foremost economists in Roumania and even more pro-British in his political outlook than Constantinescu. He was well known in London and *persona grata* both in Whitehall and the City. His appointment was a gesture by Carol to indicate that he still had a firm belief that Britain and France would support him in his present efforts to ward off Hitler's encroachments and would provide him with the

necessary aid should the failure of these efforts result, as Carol was certain they would, in a Nazi aggression against Roumania.

When Tilea reached Croydon by aeroplane from Paris, he drove direct to the Foreign Office in Whitehall to acquaint Lord Halifax and his advisers that the pressure of the Nazis was fast reaching a critical stage. To mark the urgency of the situation Carol sent, through Tilea, to the British Government a special message which, in effect, was—"buy our surplus wheat and oil, without delay, and give me the possibility of telling the Germans that we have already entered into long-term commitments with the United Kingdom. I can then tell them that, unfortunately, there is nothing left that we can sell".

The sense of urgency conveyed by Tilea was not shared by the British Foreign Office whose immediate response was to "give the matter consideration". The Foreign Office did give the matter consideration, but did so in the unhurried fashion which, in that department, was as much a tradition as a method of transacting diplomatic affairs. No doubt, in an important matter of business of this nature, consultation with and the advice of "the City" were necessary, though the issues involved in the offer to sell Roumania's wheat and oil went far beyond a mere question of trade and finance. Tilea made that clear, too, in the course of his many and exasperating conferences with the experts in Whitehall.

In the end, Carol's almost plaintive proposal was rejected completely. This was a grave decision and a good reason had to be found for it. The reason given, with regret, of course, was that the Roumanian grain was of bad quality and Roumanian oil was too dear, and much more expensive than the Mexican. There was no mention of the Germans or any suggestion as to how Roumania could counteract their pressure; there was not the slightest indication that the Foreign Office understood that Carol was seeking, not a simple business deal, but the means of strengthening his defences against Hitler.

Tilea found himself in the peculiar and unhappy position of having to argue the matter on strictly commercial lines and he felt constrained to put forward the suggestion, as an inducement to the British Government to reconsider their decision, that, if war were to come, the price of both wheat and oil would certainly rise and that, if they took advantage of the offer to secure the Roumanian production, there would be for Britain a substantial profit on the deal. The Foreign Office was not impressed either with the prospect of profit or with the argument about the contingency of war. Britain did not buy Roumania's surplus wheat and oil.

Tilea persevered and, until the beginning of March, made a number of attempts to reach an understanding for closer commercial relations between Britain and Roumania. These efforts could not, however, be dignified by the term "negotiations"; they were, in

reality, a series of bickerings over petty details connected with "clearing" and prices. There appeared to be, on the British side, little comprehension of the irrelevance and the unimportance of these details, in the light of the tremendous events that were then taking shape and looming heavily over the European scene. When the storm broke, no progress whatever had been made in the Anglo-Roumanian trade *pourparlers* in London. But in Bucharest, Doktor Clodius and Herr Fabricius were exhibiting clear signs of impatience; they were now making demands, rather than proposals. Germany evidently did not consider Roumania's wheat too bad or her oil too dear.

On March 15, 1939, Hitler's armies marched into Prague. When Europe awoke from the first shock of the Nazi invasion and seizure of Czechoslovakia, it became clear that Hitler had decided that his organisation for the major aggression was adequate, and that he could now proceed to carry out the grand scheme of German conquest—the *Drang nach den Osten*. It became equally clear that, in arriving at this decision, he had taken the full measure of the vacillating Western democracies. The farcical proceedings in London between Tilea and the British Foreign Office (about which the Wilhelmstrasse was well informed) was not the smallest factor which enabled the Fuehrer to arrive at the conclusion that it was quite safe for him to set in motion the machinery he had prepared for the Great Aggression. The question which all Europe asked was "who's turn next?"

Hitler created the puppet Republic of Slovakia. This gave him a frontier running with Roumania which, it was now obvious, had moved high up in the list of the Fuehrer's prospective victims. How high that place was Hitler lost little time in showing. Within a few days of his proclamation of the annexation of Czechoslovakia and its disruption into the "Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia" and the "independent state of Slovakia", he launched a twin offensive by propaganda against Poland and Roumania. In the case of Poland, the motif of the campaign was Danzig; in the case of Roumania, grain and oil. In both, the method was the old gangster formula of menace and extortion—"hand over, or else".

Poland received her guarantee from Britain and France—but there was nothing for Roumania. Sensing a certain reluctance on the part of the Western democracies to extend to Roumania the hurried offer of aid and protection to Poland in the event of an aggression against her, the Nazis felt that the way was clear, and comparatively easy, to turn the screw hard and tightly on King Carol. The thing was planned on the scale of the grand strategy of coercion in which Goebbels, Ribbentrop and Clodius all took a major part.

Goebbels set all Europe agog with reports, rumours and "eyewitness" stories, spread mainly through non-German sources and

capitals, of mass movements of German troops and mechanised forces across Slovakia in the direction of the Roumanian frontier. The varying estimates of these forces stabilised themselves into a fixed figure of twenty-five German divisions, with the auxiliary air forces, massed in Slovakia within striking distance of Roumania.

Ribbentrop busied himself with the Hungarians and Bulgarians. From Budapest and Sofia came circumstantial accounts of armies collecting on the Transylvanian and Dobrudja frontiers, together with a barrage of obviously inspired, though unofficially expressed, demands on Roumania for the return of territories "stolen" from the Hungarian and Bulgarian fatherlands.

To point the delicacy of Roumania's position, Fabricius, the Nazi Minister, was instructed to emphasise, in Bucharest, the uncomfortable fact that the Hungarians, who had played the jackal rôle in pouncing upon the prostrate and torn Czechoslovakia, had seized Carpatho-Ukraine, and were apparently ready to spring at Roumania's throat. The Roumanian General Staff were distinctly worried that the Hungarians had massed in Carpatho-Ukraine about 200,000 troops with heavy artillery, tanks and anti-tank weapons, a force wholly disproportionate to the necessity of holding the seized territory against its inhabitants. The Hungarians offered the explanation that this great army was intended only "for defence purposes" and as "a precaution".

Clodius was truculently insistent, in Bucharest, for a comprehensive trade treaty. All these moves added up to an impending attack on Roumania and they were so interpreted in Bucharest where there was considerable alarm.

The climax of this dangerous situation came towards the end of March, when news reached the Roumanian Government that Germany was about to present an ultimatum calling for immediate submission to economic "collaboration" with the Reich, failing which the German armies would march into Roumania. First information that the ultimatum was in readiness was received by Tilea from the Roumanian Legation in Berlin. The informant was one of the counsellors who was married to a German woman enjoying the friendship and confidence of Goebbels. There was similar news from Tatarascu, the Minister in Paris, who telephoned it to Tilea in London. In addition, an official of the German Legation in Bucharest, a former Austrian diplomat, not only disclosed to the Roumanian Government the fact that the ultimatum had been prepared, but transmitted the text of it. That official, Schmidt, was soon afterwards shot dead by the Nazi Press Attaché in the German Legation in Bucharest.

When Tilea, on the instructions of his government, hurried to the British Foreign Office to convey his grave information and to express the alarm of Bucharest, the news of the impending ultimatum had already been broadcast throughout the world. In face of this

emergency, Tilea pressed for a guarantee of his country's frontiers against the imminent aggression, on the same lines as the Franco-British Guarantee to Poland. The British Government hesitated. Lord Halifax was righteously sympathetic with the Roumanians in their plight, but did not feel in a position to translate his sympathy into the form which they requested so urgently.

Tilea pleaded for a real understanding of Roumania's position, in Britain's own interests, in the event of a war with Germany. He enlarged on the theme that Roumania was on the high road to the Middle East, to the oil of Iraq and to the unlimited wealth of India, and that his country was, therefore, as vital a frontier for Britain as Mr. Neville Chamberlain's predecessor, Lord Baldwin, held the Rhine to be. Tilea suggested that Roumania was, or could be made, a powerful bastion for the defence of the Middle East, of Egypt and the Suez Canal.

In his pleadings, Tilea was ably seconded by his Press Counsellor, Dimitri Dimancescu, who, two years later, recalled the vain efforts to induce the British Government to understand the importance, to Britain, of Roumania:

"Since 1938, we have offered ourselves as potential allies to those whom we thought might have been willing to withstand Hitler's lust for world conquest. Unfortunately our efforts were treated with little consideration. I remember, in 1939, going myself from door to door with an article which appeared in the *Deutscher Volkswirt* boasting that if the Germans were once to set foot in Roumania it would be an easy matter for them to get hold of the Suez Canal, and then master Asia and Africa.

"We Roumanians were then saying to certain people here in England, 'You have foolishly allowed the Czechoslovak stronghold to fall into German hands. Let us now be your advance bastion of the Suez Canal. We have a good army of some two million men. Let us buy from you, with our oil and wheat, the tools we need to do the job of fighting for our liberty and independence. We will also fight indirectly for that Suez, which is the lifeline of your Empire. By no means do not on any consideration allow the Germans to come and take from us the wheat and the oil which you will some day need'.

"Unfortunately those who were then in a position to accept our offer spoke different languages from ours: they were interested in unpaid commercial debts, clearing arrangements, higher exchange rates for the pound sterling, and especially in the rates of interest on a prospective loan. They told us that oil could be bought cheaper across the Atlantic, and that our wheat was of a lower grade than that available elsewhere. (The Germans never raised such objections.)"¹

¹ D. Dim. Dimancescu: *A Plea for Roumania* (1941).

Tilea's arguments were listened to with patience but without commitment as to their validity. Mr. Neville Chamberlain was perplexed at the evident gravity of the East-European developments, but expressed doubt about the desirability of committing Britain to the formal protection of Roumania. Out of that attitude Tilea was unable to shake the Prime Minister, who could not be induced to give a decisive answer to the Roumanian Minister's insistent and almost daily representations that the British Government should act quickly, decisively and affirmatively. The only comfort Tilea was given was the promise that a British Board of Trade mission would be sent to Bucharest to discuss the possibility of a new Anglo-Roumanian Commercial Agreement. But there was no indication of the principles on which the mission was to work, nor any suggestion about the terms of reference. There was no more than the promise of good intentions, no suggestion of urgency, no practical appreciation of the fact that, in view of Clodius' now importunate pressure in Bucharest, Roumania could not possibly extricate herself from the position of being coerced under threat of attack, helplessly to tie herself to Nazi Germany. That Germany meant to push matters to a head and take advantage of British hesitancy was seen in the fact that Clodius was reinforced in Bucharest by Herr Wohltat, his official superior, and, like his subordinate, a past-master in the art of peaceful negotiations under threat of force.

Carol was now trapped between the distantly sympathetic, but wholly unreal, interest of Britain (and France) and the very real and present insistence of the Germans. There was much regret but little surprise in Roumania when it was announced on the night of Monday, March 20, 1939, that the terms of a "modified" trade agreement between Germany and Roumania were being decided at a conference between the economic experts of the respective countries. The agreement was signed the next day by Wohltat and the Roumanian Minister of Commerce. Under it Roumania undertook to sell to Germany an increased quantity of produce, chiefly oil and grain, copper, chromium, and manganese—all vital raw materials for war. The Nazi demands were by no means met but, by this new agreement, Hitler had moved another step towards making Roumania, "a virtual economic colony" of Germany, as one diplomatic commentator in Bucharest described it. He declared, however, that "had not the King stubbornly opposed the German conditions, Roumania might have become a German economic colony", and added that throughout the discussions King Carol insisted on leaving the door open to other countries and rejected many suggestions that might have robbed Roumania of her economic independence.

The Prime Minister, Armand Calinescu, was obliged to deny to the Grand Council of the King's Party of National Renaissance that the new trade agreement with Germany meant the sacrifice of

Roumania's economic independence and he insisted that trade relations with other countries were by no means disturbed. He added that trade talks with France were "continuing", while the arrival of the British economic mission was being "awaited with interest". Calinescu went out of his way to launch a bitter attack on Hungary whom he accused of "cheating". He announced his Government's knowledge of the fact that Hungary had concentrated, on March 14 (the day before Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia), five army corps close to the Roumanian frontiers, while the Hungarian Press and radio were using the most aggressive language against Roumania.

The denial and the attack upon Hungary indicated, only too clearly, that Carol and his Government knew how close the danger of Nazi Germany had come. Calinescu's emphasis that trade relations with other countries were left undisturbed by the agreement with Germany bore only one interpretation—that Roumania's position was becoming grave and could only be saved by the aid and protection of Britain and France. How strong these fears were was evidenced by the hurried reorganisation of Roumania's armies and the dispatch of strong forces to the Hungarian and Bulgarian frontiers, by the cancellation of the King's official receptions and the postponement of the Foreign Minister Gafencu's projected visits to Ankara, London, Paris and Rome. In Paris, Georges Tatarascu, the Roumanian Minister, conferred with Georges Bonnet, the French Foreign Minister, and with M. Souritz, the Soviet Ambassador.

Tilea, who was in Bucharest, hurried back to London. It was stated that he had been "entrusted with far-reaching plans for negotiations which aim at the preservation of Roumanian independence". This meant, simply, that he was to press, in the most urgent manner, for a British Guarantee. The unfortunate Minister in London, recalling his anxious and fruitless efforts to bring the light of reality into the misty and tired eyes of Mr. Neville Chamberlain and his Cabinet colleagues, realised that he was faced with an almost impossible task. Yet, the position was critical; without a guarantee Roumania must fall totally into the grip of Hitler, who would first dismember her as he had done in the case of Czechoslovakia.

Almost desperate, Tilea sought the advice and assistance of the British Labour leaders. Here he found not only sympathy but understanding. They realised the political and strategical consequences to Britain and Europe should Roumania fall economically into the hands of Hitler and they promised support for the request for a guarantee and aid. Mr. Arthur Greenwood and Dr. Hugh Dalton made good their promise by offering to act as a delegation to the Prime Minister to explain to him personally the urgency of the situation, as well as its implications, and to endeavour to induce

him to offer the guarantee. It was arranged that they should call on Mr. Chamberlain at 10, Downing Street, before nine o'clock in the morning of April 13. The reason for the early hour was that they should be able to present the case to Mr. Chamberlain alone, before the arrival of Sir Horace Wilson. They were fortunate in gaining the private ear of Mr. Chamberlain and succeeded in convincing him that a guarantee to Roumania was desirable.

Yet, the Prime Minister wriggled. He asked the Roumanians why the guarantee should be given without something in exchange and proceeded to define his point by suggesting that Roumania should transfer to Bulgaria a number of villages (he mentioned seven) in the Southern Dobrudja. Such a transfer, Mr. Chamberlain contended, would be a concession on the part of Roumania to meet Bulgarian clamour for territorial revision and so would ease the general Balkan tension. The Prime Minister had a further, and, he suggested, a more urgent argument for such a transfer; it would be of advantage to Britain in that Bulgaria could probably be induced, in return for Britain's aid in restoring these villages, to yield some concession to British economic, political or strategic interest in Eastern Europe. The Prime Minister did not specify the particular sort of concession he or his advisers had in mind. Probably, he was indulging in his favourite day-dream of peace by appeasement; in foreign affairs, big or small, there seemed to him to be no other way of resolving troublesome situations. In this particular case, he appeared to regard the transfer of a few villages as a small price to pay for the solution of what seemed to be a big problem and he suggested that Roumania should be happy to buy off her clamant neighbour so easily.

It was not altogether surprising that the Prime Minister should make the suggestion; after all, the Sudetenland transfer to Germany was still fresh in his mind. It was true that the surrender of Czechoslovak territory had not brought happiness to the Czechs, but it had, in his view, brought peace, and war did not seem to him to be imminent. Moreover, Mr. Chamberlain approached the question of the Roumanian guarantee, as he did most political matters, from "a business point of view", the basis of which always was, never give anything without getting something in return. It was represented to him, however, that the whole Balkan problem could not be solved in terms of seven villages in the Southern Dobrudja. In the end, he yielded, though not without reluctance. In the afternoon of April 13, 1939, the Prime Minister announced in the House of Commons that Great Britain was prepared to guarantee the independence and sovereignty of Roumania against aggression, though it contained no specific promise of aid in case of an attack by an aggressor state.

The reaction in Berlin was one of baffled fury. The Wilhelm-

strasse, through Goebbels' propaganda machine, fulminated against the "unwarranted and provocative" British action and indignantly denied that Germany had put any pressure on Roumania. The British Government, it was alleged, had been tricked by the Roumanians. The ultimatum story, Goebbels declared, was a Roumanian invention to force the hands of Britain. Ribbentrop denied the existence of the ultimatum and the intention to present one. As always, the Nazis sought out a victim for punishment and they fastened on Tilea whose cunning and deceit, they claimed, had invented the ultimatum. Ribbentrop instructed Fabricius, the Nazi Minister in Bucharest, to call on Gafencu, the Roumanian Foreign Minister, and demand an official denial of the ultimatum story, and the dismissal of Tilea. Fabricius' demand was peremptory.

If, in fact, there had been no Nazi ultimatum, there could be no mistake that Germany was presenting one now. The British Government, unwilling to be drawn into the controversy and anxious to avert a crisis, advised concession. Gafencu thereupon repudiated Tilea by declaring that he was not authorised to impart the information about a projected German ultimatum. King Carol, however, would not permit any further concession and strenuously resisted the demand for Tilea's recall. Nevertheless, he thought it wise to "play safe" and made a show of meeting the Nazi demand. He summoned Tilea to Bucharest "to report". It was generally thought that, in this way, Carol was throwing over the Minister who had procured the British guarantee. But after a few weeks' stay in Bucharest Tilea returned to his post in London.

Simultaneously with the "repudiation" of Tilea, it was announced in Bucharest that Gafencu would pay an official visit forthwith to Berlin to exchange views with the Nazi Government and to clarify relations with Germany. In reality, his purpose was to find out, if he could, just what were Hitler's intentions with regard to Roumania. The British Government were puzzled and suspicious about the visit, and to allay any doubts about Carol's good faith they were informed that Gafencu would also go to London.

The offer of a guarantee appeared to commit Britain to economic collaboration with Roumania and this impression was confirmed by the announcement, the day after Mr. Chamberlain's declaration in Parliament, that an important economic mission, headed by Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, the Treasury economic expert, would shortly leave for Bucharest. The mission reached Bucharest on April 23. The same day, Gafencu arrived in London. He was met by Lord Halifax, lunched at the Foreign Office and, the same afternoon, was received by Mr. Chamberlain at the House of Commons. Two days later, the Roumanian Foreign Minister was honoured with an invitation to lunch at Buckingham Palace. Next day he was taken to an airfield and was shown Britain's Spitfires and Blenheims. As

an ex-pilot he was even allowed to fly in one of the bombers, a few of which were to be acquired by Roumania.

He left for Paris that day, confident that he had accomplished a great task. He had given the British Government a full account of his visit to Berlin where he had seen and been talked to by Hitler. Much of the Fuehrer's long declamation was taken up with a dissertation on Germany's military might. He declared vehemently that if Britain should antagonise him he would smash the British Empire "in no time". He referred mysteriously and repeatedly to his "terrific secret weapon". He was full of praise for Roumania and assured the Foreign Minister that he was only anxious for co-operation with his country and that he had "no designs whatever" against her.

In Roumania, Carol and his government were certain, having regard to the special honours accorded to Gafencu in London, that British support and co-operation were assured and that, because of them, Roumania could and should resist any further encroachment by Germany. In fact, the Roumanians were much too optimistic. Gafencu had made three main points in his conversations with the British Government. First, Czechoslovakia having been eliminated as an independent state and the Skoda Works at Pilsen being now in German hands, Roumania's main source for the supply of munitions and war material was cut off. Second, would the Black Sea Straits be kept open to enable Roumania to obtain her munitions supplies elsewhere? Third, where would these supplies come from? The British reply to the second point was that the freedom of the Straits was a matter which came within the jurisdiction of Turkey and that Roumania would herself require to settle the problem with her. To the question, who would replace Czechoslovakia as the supplier of war material?—a clear invitation to Britain—the Foreign Office replied with only vague promises; it would depend on the outcome of the Leith-Ross Mission. That proviso was an unhappy one for Roumania.

The work of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross and his staff in Bucharest soon made it evident that Gafencu's visit to London had been far from fruitful. The British Economic Mission conceived the problem of Anglo-Roumanian collaboration, in the light of the British guarantee, in a peculiarly restricted sense. These experts did not seem to worry a great deal about the economic and political aspects of the problem in the context of Hitlerian aggression in Europe. They dealt with the Roumanians on the basis that they were to attempt to stabilise Anglo-Roumanian commercial relations, as a kind of domestic matter of trade between two states. If they considered larger issues at all, it was only to suggest that there were certain questions of finance and commerce to be adjusted between the two countries before any broader issues could be dealt with. The most thorny problem in the minds of the British mission,

the one on which they concentrated, was that of certain unpaid commercial debts owed by Roumanian to British firms. Then there was the so-called Clearing Problem. The British Trade experts spent much time in attempts to induce the Roumanians to fix a higher exchange rate of lei for the pound sterling, notwithstanding the inevitable consequence that this would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the Roumanian Government to buy war material in Britain. The "negotiations" resolved themselves into a long series of petty bickerings and bargainings.

The Roumanians were not only disheartened; they were resentful. In the end, all that came out of the widely trumpeted British Economic Mission, which was believed to provide the evidence of British resolution to block Hitler's path to European domination, was the proposal of a British credit to Roumania amounting to £5,000,000 at 5½ per cent, a rate of interest ½ per cent higher than the normal rate of inter-state credits. Even this ludicrously small loan was subject to the offset payment by Roumania of the outstanding commercial debts owing to London. The Roumanians were bitterly disappointed. They declared that when there was a question of life or death for Roumania, involving the possible sacrifice of millions of lives and the destruction of vast national possessions, the expression of British aid in terms of £5,000,000 at ½ per cent more interest, imposing a heavier financial burden on a small and poor state, seemed a lack of appreciation of the facts of a critical position.

When the Leith-Ross Mission departed the Roumanian Government decided to send their own, and an important, economic mission to London. The official announcement gave it out that this mission would discuss the details of the Leith-Ross credit. In reality, the move was designed to put a good face on the failure of the British Mission to understand and deal with the larger question of Roumania's needs. The purpose of and instructions to the Roumanian Mission were to re-open the major issue of British aid consequent on the British Guarantee and to persuade the British Government to see the whole problem in terms of the growingly grave international situation.

The Roumanian Economic Mission arrived in London on May 30, 1939. One month later M. Victor Badulescu, its principal member and leader, left for Bucharest. The other members hung about London, seeing an occasional official of the Foreign Office, visiting a factory in the Midlands, calling on a City financier. Gradually they trickled back to Roumania. The few that remained left Croydon for the Continent the day before the outbreak of war on September 3, 1939. In the three months of negotiations and discussions in London, the mission made arrangements for the purchase of a few hundreds of thousand yards of British cloth and placed orders for some forty British military aeroplanes. That was all.

ONCOMING STORM

IN JUNE, 1939, the lashings of the Nazi crocodile's tail were already observed to be stirring up the muddy waters of war in Europe. The immediate prey was Poland. In steadily increasing volume, reptilian tears gushed forth in angry anguish at the "sufferings of the down-trodden German victims of Polish persecution" in Danzig, Pomerania, the Province of Poznan, all abutting on the German frontiers and well within the orbit of Nazi *Lebensraum*. Stealthily, the Beast was moving forward for the attack and all Europe held its breath, in anticipation of his spring. While concentrating attention on Poland, Hitler was not forgetting the prospective victim on the south-east, marked on the Nazi maps for absorption into the "New German Europe".

Berlin kept a close watch on the activities of both the Leith-Ross Mission in Bucharest and the Badulescu Mission in London. The Nazi agents reported faithfully to their headquarters the tragedy-comedy of Anglo-Roumanian negotiations for "closer understanding and co-operation" and the farcical results that were emerging from them. They reported, also, the atmosphere of disappointment and resentment, as well as the feeling of helplessness prevailing in Roumania in consequence of the contemptuously meagre demonstration of aid and collaboration made by her powerful British "guarantor" of her independence and security. This was just the situation in which Nazi Germany revelled and did the best work of pressure and menace. Here was the internal bewilderment and the sense of weak frustration out of which to coerce the fullest advantage in the pursuit of Nazi designs for conquest. Here was the opportune moment to exert, forcefully and directly, the weight of German power, in contrast with the supine indecision of democratic shilly-shallying.

The Herr Doktor Karl Clodius was instructed, accordingly, to request, as a matter of urgency, that Roumania should ratify without further delay, the Trade Agreement entered into, in March, between her and Germany. The ratification was urgent for two reasons: first, as a Nazi diplomatic counter-stroke against Britain, and second, to secure for Hitler the necessary supply and reserve of oil for his prospective opening of the European war and to gain him control of the Roumanian granary for the maintenance of Germany's food supply during its progress.

The usual interchange of communications followed between Clodius and the Roumanian Minister of Trade and Finance and between Herr Fabricius, the Nazi Minister, and M. Grigore Gafencu,

the Roumanian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Carol, as always, really directed the course of the negotiations. At first, he temporised, with his customary ability; he did not decline to ratify the agreement, nor did he agree to do so. He hoped for a last-minute sign from Britain indicating such effective support as would enable him to maintain his opposition to a step which would place Roumania farther within the orbit of Nazi Germany. He sent urgent messages to London acquainting the British Government with the extent and the manner of German pressure and with his inability to hold out indefinitely against it. The sign did not come.

Watching apprehensively the growing peril of Poland and being apprised of the movements of large German forces not only towards the Polish frontiers but also through and into Slovakia, on his own doorstep, Carol found himself in a position where he could no longer offer any valid reason why he should not execute formally the agreement he had entered into with Germany. He ratified the March Trade Agreement.

Carol well knew that this meant a victory for Hitler; indeed, it was the first Roumanian side-slip into the grip of Nazi Germany. He realised something more—that the ratification, with the sterile results of the British Guarantee, had weakened his position abroad and diminished his authority in his country. His obviously pro-British—and pro-French—policy had suffered a severe setback. The consequences were bound to involve further German encroachment, and encouragement to opposition forces in Roumania itself.

For the first time in his reign, the King felt his inability to stand alone. War was in sight. The German *Drang nach Osten* was about to be set in motion. The powerfully-armed Nazi aggressor was approaching his borders. Roumania was weak militarily, and torn, economically, between reliance on Germany and the Western democracies. Carol realised that he could not himself carry the responsibility for state policy and action in face of the growing gravity of the task which confronted Roumania, as European peace slowly ebbed away. Vital and critical decisions for the defence of the state had to be taken. The King did not waver in his determination to stand resolute, alone or with the help of others, against the advance of Germany and in the maintenance of Roumanian independence. But he felt that he must share the responsibility for policy and the decisions necessary for its execution.

He resolved to call for elections on the basis of the new Electoral Law drafted by Armand Calinescu on the principle of the Corporative State. The elections were held and within a week the Roumanian Parliament was summoned. In his Speech from the Throne on June 7, Carol sought to obtain support and to unite the nation behind him by explaining that the "Royal Revolution", alleged by his opponents to have been the sinister purpose of the new Constitution of 1938, was no attempt on his part to rule by

means of a royal dictatorship, but rather a patriotic endeavour to achieve national unity through the elimination of the evils of squabbling political parties and of the disruptive consequences of their bickering feuds.

A comparatively minor event, the following day, showed or perhaps was intended as an indication that Carol's mind was still working in the direction of association with the Western democracies and that he still hoped that Roumania's salvation lay in collaboration with Britain. Maybe his intention was to make a gesture of encouragement to Britain to see that the episode of the ratification of the Nazi-Roumanian Trade Agreement (which had caused grimaces of displeasure in London) should be considered only in the context of German pressure and not as a major change in his political sympathies.

June 8 was the day of the annual Festival of *Strajeri*, the Roumanian National Youth Movement, of which King Carol was the founder. This organisation was one of Carol's most precious interests; it was his personal creation. *Strajeri*, modelled closely, and deliberately, on the British Boy Scout Movement of Lord Baden-Powell, had as its motto: "Faith and Work, for King and Country." Its object was "to amplify and complete the educational training given to the youth of Roumania in their homes or by the schools" and "the formation of good and healthy citizens—in mind and body—conscious of their duty towards their King and Country and to reciprocal good feeling among themselves". Its membership was estimated to be more than three millions; the boys had uniforms and flags and gave the old Roumanian right-hand salute (used long before Mussolini or Hitler adopted it), with the greeting *Sanatate* (Good Health). Democratic sceptics in Roumania and abroad looked askance on *Strajeri* and held it to be evidence of Carol's Fascist tendencies. He had created and fashioned the Youth Movement, it was alleged, on the model of the *Hitler Jugend* so that *Strajeri* might play, for Roumanian Fascism, the same part which had been assigned to the *Hitler Jugend* in Nazi Germany—the reservoir of militarism and autocracy.

On this occasion, Carol, who had always resented this interpretation of his Boy Scout Movement, pointedly invited to Bucharest to take a leading part in the Festival, Lord Somers, who afterwards succeeded to the leadership of the British Boy Scout Organisation on the death of Baden-Powell. Significantly, the representatives of the *Hitler Jugend* were not present.

In his Speech from the Throne, the King made no reference to foreign affairs and gave no indication of the direction of his foreign policy. It was a notable omission, having regard to German pressure towards Eastern Europe, the unsatisfactory state of the financial and trade negotiations in London and the recently

ratified Trade Pact with Germany. Obviously, a statement was required in order to clarify, to whatever extent this was possible, a situation in which Roumania seemed to be drifting indecisively between Germany and the democracies. The country, through the Parliament newly elected to express national solidarity and confidence in the King, was even more anxious to learn on what road Carol and his Government were taking the nation, to avert or withstand the oncoming storm of aggression and war.

On June 9, Grigore Gafencu, the Foreign Minister, made good the omission. In an exposé of foreign policy to Parliament he used the cautious and customary phrases of diplomacy to assert Roumania's will for peace, her desire for friendship for all and sundry and her resolution to maintain her integrity and independence. One sentence did give a significant clue to Carol's ideas on foreign affairs; for although the speech was the speech of Gafencu, the views were those of the King. The Foreign Minister employed the formula: "The existing frontiers of Roumania are essential for the *Lebensraum* of the Roumanian people." The use of so famous a word, the fond creation of Nazi philosophy, if not of the Fuehrer himself, could only have been deliberate and could only have emanated from Carol himself. If he did not actually indite the word he must have authorised it. He did so, not merely in imitation of Hitler but impishly to turn the Nazi's doctrine to Roumania's account. There was a clear, though subtle reference to be drawn from Gafencu's formula—that, despite appearances to the contrary, Carol was not meekly permitting Roumania to be forced into the Nazi orbit, war or no war. It meant that the Trade Pact with Germany was not to be translated by either London or Berlin as a final Roumanian surrender to Hitler; the Pact was to mean no more than a temporary yielding in a temporarily difficult situation.

That this was a correct interpretation of Carol's foreign policy was made manifest when it was announced that the Foreign Minister had left for Ankara and Athens, the same evening after his speech to Parliament. Gafencu's mission was one of enquiry in Turkey and Greece as to whether, in the event of an emergency involving Roumania in war with Germany, Carol could rely on the support of these Balkan powers. Greece and Turkey were hesitant and non-committal. The mission was not accounted a success; nor did Carol feel happier or more secure because of it. He had still less cause for happiness some days after Gafencu's return to Bucharest, when a strange piece of news reached Bucharest.

On June 28, the King received a dispatch from London to the effect that important political circles close to the Chamberlain Government, and at least one Cabinet Minister, were taking the view that Germany was entitled to economic expansion in South-Eastern

Europe. Such views bore all the evidence that, notwithstanding "guarantees" to the smaller states of Europe, "appeasement" was still rampant in Whitehall. Carol assumed, no doubt rightly, that London was aware that Roumania was geographically as well as politically and economically within "South-Eastern Europe" and that such views would certainly be interpreted in Berlin as British willingness to look the other way, if not actually to assent, in the event of a Nazi advance—only economically, of course—on Roumania.

Carol knew, better apparently than Whitehall, that any such an advance would mean an inevitable sacrifice of security and independence and that political and strategic losses to Roumania would follow, with inexorable certainty. The British Foreign Office could not have been surprised, therefore, when Carol made indignant and anxious representations in London for clarification of the British position in relation to Roumania and her needs in connection with the looming emergency in Eastern Europe. Carol left no room for doubt about his alarm at this unexpected development, all the more strange in view of the inadequacies of the recent Leith-Ross Mission to Bucharest and the Roumanian Mission then actually in London.

Carol's almost desperate representations did shake the British Government into a semblance of awareness of the realities. The file of the Leith-Ross Mission was extracted from the Treasury and Foreign Office departments and the proposals the Mission had made were examined with some show of expedition. At last, on July 11, it was announced in London that negotiations with Roumania on the question of economic aid and collaboration, under and in terms of the British Guarantee, had been concluded and that Roumania would receive a British credit to the amount of £5,500,000—at five and a half per cent interest. The Roumanians expected to receive not less than £20,000,000, for the Bucharest Government, like most of the other European states, had determined on a heavy increase in expenditure for the "defence of the frontiers", as the Prime Minister Calinescu had stated, to meet probable Nazi aggression and the threat of war.

Roumania's normal defence budget provided for an expenditure of some £13,000,000 a year. It was now found necessary to increase that budget for minimum requirements of the army and air force to nearly £35,000,000 to cover the next few months only. Carol and his advisers had already considered a plan of elaborate fortifications along a 300-mile line "covering" the western and north-eastern frontiers. Britain's contribution towards these defences was hardly enough to arouse enthusiasm in Bucharest or to strengthen Carol's position at home.

Nor was the effect on Roumania of Britain's wholly unsatisfactory credit lost on Nazi Germany. It was realised there, of

course, that this left Carol without any greater protection against German pressure and that Hitler, in due time, could proceed along the old lines of demand backed by threat and a show of force. For, whatever advantage Germany had secured under the March Agreement was merely a "token" of further "concessions" yet to be demanded. Step by step, bit by bit, one by one—this was the rhythm of Hitler's method in the case of Roumania and other small and weak nations. On his part, Carol realised that, notwithstanding the British Guarantee (perhaps because of it) and the small credit offered by London, his peril in face of the evolving aims of Hitler was in no way diminished. He looked for other ways in which to secure his country against the Nazi aggressor.

Having failed to obtain effective assistance in the West, the King turned to the East. Long the advocate and promoter of Balkan alliances to make up, in a combination of the smaller states, what they lacked in separate strength, Carol hoped that a way out of his difficulties, actual and prospective, was by co-operation, for defence, with Turkey and Greece. Gafencu's mission to Athens and Ankara had brought no results but Carol had the belief that his own presence and persuasiveness might accomplish what his Foreign Minister had failed to do. The task was to bring home to these two states that developments in Europe arising from the now plainly warlike intentions of Hitler would bring to them perils as great as those which threatened Roumania. The *Drang nach Osten* brought Turkey well within the picture of Nazi aggressiveness; the "New German Europe" could not possibly exclude Greece. Carol was hopeful that he could achieve success—if his neighbours understood the situation as well as he did. A combination of his own and the other two states, he believed, could, even at so late a stage, provide a formidable defence against Germany, if and when the "march eastwards" from Berlin should begin.

Carol planned a cruise in the eastern seas in order to explore the possibilities. He had to be circumspect about the manner of carrying out his plans, for the eyes of Berlin were upon him. He chose the sea trip in order to distract attention from his real purpose. It was given out that he intended to take his first long cruise in his yacht *Luceafarul* (formerly the *Nahlin* used by the British ex-King Edward VIII). Carol took a special pride in this vessel, his first really modern full-sized luxury yacht, and he had not yet had the opportunity of being at sea in her or of satisfying his ambition to be a yachtsman. Besides, it was stated that the strain of recent events made it essential that he should take a long sea voyage to restore his health.

The destination of the *Luceafarul* was to be the waters of the Aegean Sea. The yacht cruised as far as Istanbul where Carol was joined by the Crown Prince Michael. The diplomats and the press of Europe "speculated" whether the Roumanian King

would meet President Inonu of Turkey. The yacht moved on towards Crete and cruised around the island. It was reported that a meeting between Carol and King George of Greece was likely to take place. There were equally widespread "speculations" about a prospective meeting with King Boris of Bulgaria.

Carol thoroughly enjoyed his trip and was much exhilarated by the delight of being a yachtsman. He was particularly happy in the company of his son; this was the first long holiday they had been able to spend together. Long afterwards he told his intimate friends: "these days on the *Luceafarul* were the happiest days of my ten years as King." Politically, Carol was not so happy.

The meetings with the Greek and Bulgarian monarchs did not take place, nor did the Turkish President come aboard the *Luceafarul*. Carol made one last effort to gain some result of his project of association with his most powerful Balkan neighbour and on the return journey he put the yacht once more into Istanbul. At Carol's urgent request, President Inonu came to visit him. There was a brief conversation. The discussion was friendly, even cordial, but beyond an exchange of assurances of common interests and mutual understanding nothing concrete emerged.

Disappointed, Carol turned back to Roumania. On the way, he received wireless messages from Bucharest which told of the steadily worsening European situation. Hitler was now pressing Poland hard; there were excitements in Danzig and "incidents" on the German-Polish frontiers; the Fuehrer was making the customary and ominous gestures of "exhausted patience". When Carol disembarked at Constanza on August 11, 1939, the engines of the Nazi war machine were being tuned up for the first move towards the *Drang nach Osten*.

CHAPTER XV

MURDER OF A PREMIER

THE OUTBREAK OF the Second World War produced alarm and confusion in Roumania. Nowhere in Europe was there more consternation than in Bucharest when, on the night of August 31, 1939, came the startling news that Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia had concluded a Pact of Non-Aggression. Roumania interpreted this as having, for her, only one meaning—a double threat to her territorial integrity, on the west by Germany, on the north by Russia.

Carol felt himself trapped in a ring of "revisionism". Hungary, backed by Germany, was already demanding the return of his western province of Transylvania; Bulgaria on the south, en-

couraged by Hitler, was calling for the restoration of the Dobrudja; the Nazi-dominated "Republic" of Slovakia had laid open his north-western frontier to Hitler; the attack on Poland threatened to bring the Nazi "Panzer Divisionen" to the northern borders of Roumania; the northern province of Bessarabia was now rendered weak by reason of Russia's pact with Germany. By way of balance, Carol held the Guarantee of Great Britain but its unsatisfactory consequences gave him and his government little feeling of comfort, less of security. Relations with Germany were far from good; with Russia they were, as always, strained.

Hitler's three weeks' conquest of Poland and the subsequent partition of the country between Germany and Russia completed the alarm and anxiety of Roumania. Carol sat uneasily on the jagged edge of neutrality. In his name and with his authority, Armand Calinescu, the Prime Minister, made a bold show of courage in this perilous position: "If Roumania is attacked by anyone whomsoever," he declared, "she will defend her frontiers and her sovereignty to the last breath. We are fighters to the death, where our existence is concerned. Our army is well trained, we are prepared psychologically and we are united as never before." The sentiment was inspiring and sincere but it was more in the nature of "whistling to keep up one's courage". For Roumania was by no means prepared. Her potential military strength, two million men, was, numerically, quite formidable, but as a fighting force in a possible contest with a major power like Germany—or Russia—it was sadly ineffective. The Roumanian soldiers were brave and resolute fighters but they were hopelessly deficient in modern armament and equipment. The land defences were defective and out of date. The frontiers were perilously vulnerable.

Carol talked of neutrality, but realistically gave orders to place the country in a position of defence against a possible attack. These were the days of the Maginot Line system of fortifications against which, it was believed, an aggressor would hurl himself in vain. Since the last war, the Roumanians followed slavishly and were firm believers in the genius of the French military engineers, and Carol followed them now. Thousands of workmen and engineers were hastily despatched to the west and north to erect a great and formidable line of fortresses of steel and concrete, above and below ground, fortified ditches, tank traps, canals and pill-boxes. They were to build a line of fortifications stretching along the whole Hungarian frontier from the River Muresh, in the west, to the Province of Bukovina, in the north. The line was to continue on the River Dniester, along the Russian frontier and to end at the Black Sea. The dyke defences were to be linked with all the rivers coming down from the Carpathian Mountains and were to be so constructed that, in case of emergency, flooding operations could be carried out. The work was put in hand with

feverish speed. Roumania's Maginot Line came to be known as "Carol's Dyke". As the work progressed, Carol felt more assured and safer in the belief that he had walled up his state by a modern rampart against attack and invasion. He had "Carol's Dyke" in mind when, at the end of the year, he declared: "Roumania will stand like a living wall against aggression."

Hitler was laying Warsaw in ruins, the campaign in Poland was approaching its end—after three weeks of breath-taking ferocity, unparalleled in history. During that time, and in the preceding weeks which Hitler required for his final preparations for the onslaught upon Poland, Roumania had been left free from direct Nazi pressure. Like the allied belligerents in the West, Roumanian anxiety concerned itself with the question "What will Hitler do next?" True to his strategy of the "nerve war", Hitler gave no indication whether he would continue south-eastwards, to swallow up the smaller Balkan fry or launch the full weight of his armed forces, triumphant after the Polish victory, against the French legions massed in and behind the "impregnable" steel and concrete of the Maginot Line, facing his own vaunted "Western Wall". So Roumania waited, tense and anxious. Outwardly, things were calm; the Iron Guard was quiet and unobtrusive; the parties were dormant and acquiescent under the authority of the King's National Renaissance Front which had given the nation apparent "unity" and freedom from political faction.

On a sudden, the whole fabric of internal quiet collapsed through a tragic and bloody event which shook the Roumanian nation and startled Europe. Just before noon on September 21, 1939, the Premier, Armand Calinescu, entered his motor car at the Presidency of the Council and drove to the Cotroceni Palace for his daily conference with the King. As usual, since the last months of 1938 when the Iron Guard had repeatedly declared they would take vengeance for the death of Codreanu and his friends, an armed detective accompanied Calinescu. His conference with the King lasted less than an hour and, just before one o'clock, he was on his way home. He had just reached the Elefterie Bridge, within sight of his own home near the centre of the city, when the chauffeur observed a cart emerging from a side street. To avoid an inevitable crash, he sharply turned his motor car which was running at high speed. The car skidded, came in contact with the pavement, swung round and stopped. Instantly, two groups of men, one on each side of the street, opened up a terrific fusillade of shots from automatic pistols, firing at almost point-blank range at the occupants of the motor car. Calinescu fell dead, blood pouring from seventeen bullet wounds all over his body. The detective who had been seated beside the chauffeur was killed. The driver himself escaped unhurt.

The whole appalling tragedy was over in a few seconds. The

stunned and frightened passers-by had only a fleeting glimpse of the men who had fired the shots as they leapt into waiting motor cars in the side streets and drove off at high speed. The murderers tore through the city to the Bucharest broadcasting station. Pistols in hand, they smashed their way through the street door, shooting as they pushed ahead. The guard at the door fell severely wounded. With revolvers firing indiscriminately as they ran through the building, the murderers broke into the broadcasting studio where a gramophone record was being played. Holding up, at the pistol point, the surprised and terrified announcer, one of the gang smashed the gramophone turntable and shouted into the still "live" microphone: "The death sentence on Calinescu has been executed. The legionaries are avenged."

Once more the Iron Guard terrorists were at large on a crusade of murder and insurrection. Behind them lurked the Nazis of Germany; for investigation subsequently revealed that the whole plan and technique of the murder had been rehearsed for weeks in Germany, at one of Himmler's schools for terrorism. The actual assassins used German Army regulation Walthers revolvers provided with armour-piercing bullets.

Retribution for the massacre was swift and merciless. Within an hour the police throughout the country had seized all the Iron Guard leaders within reach and raided the known organisation offices. So swift was the action of the authorities that, before nightfall, they had arrested the chief assassin, ringleader and author of the plan to waylay and murder Calinescu. He was a lawyer, Dimitrescu, one of Codreanu's chief lieutenants who, during Calinescu's purge of the Iron Guard, had succeeded in escaping to Slovakia and later to Germany. Ten days before the murder, Dimitrescu, with his accomplices, fellow exiles, had returned to Roumania among the flood of refugees which poured into the country in flight from the Nazi invaders of Poland. At Ploesti, Dimitrescu and his fellow murderers completed the details of the plot, the outline of which had been prepared, the Roumanian authorities asserted, by the Nazi Gestapo in Berlin.

During the next few days mass executions were carried out without regard for even a semblance of judicial procedure. Iron Guardists known or believed to be the leaders of terror gangs were brought before hastily convened military tribunals, and, after signing confessions of guilt, were shot out of hand. For the assassins who had actually carried out the murder of the Prime Minister and his detective was reserved a punishment calculated more as an act of revenge and an example than as a judicial penalty. The authorities had allowed it to become known that justice was to be meted out to the assassins at the precise spot where the murders had been committed. At one o'clock on the fourth day after the crime the murderers were brought under heavy military

guard to the Elefterie Bridge. At the exact spot where Calinescu and his detective were slain and in full view of the crowds who had assembled behind a strong police cordon, the assassins were shot in the open thoroughfare. When the executions were carried out, a large banner was held aloft by police; it bore, in huge black and red letters, the words: "This is the fate which will overtake all criminals who betray their country." The banner was then thrown on the corpses which were left exposed for twenty-four hours in the street where they fell.

Carol himself was infuriated; the brutal crime was clear evidence of a widespread insurrectionary conspiracy. He took quick action to counter it. He appointed the former Minister of War, General Argesheanu, as Prime Minister. He gave orders for the country to be placed in a "state of emergency". Cavalry and infantry armed with machine guns were drafted into the capital. All important government buildings in Bucharest and all the larger towns throughout the country were placed under heavy guard. The Royal Palace, the broadcasting station, the Post Office, the railway station and bridges were similarly guarded by strong forces, while armed police patrolled all strategic roads and searched all vehicles and pedestrians for hidden arms.

The purge of the Iron Guard continued for several days. In most of the principal towns, executions were carried out on the model of those at the Elefterie Bridge at Bucharest. Iron Guard prisoners were shot at the foot of the statue, in Ploesti, of Ion Duca, the Liberal Prime Minister, murdered by the Iron Guard on the platform at Sinaia station on New Year's Eve in 1933. The prisons and concentration camps throughout the country were filled to capacity with the suspected members of the terrorist movement.

The funeral procession of the murdered Calinescu was more in the character of a military demonstration than a solemn occasion. Every shop and house on the route was heavily and closely shuttered. The streets were lined on either side with large forces of armed soldiers; police armed with revolvers stood on guard on the roof tops. The Crown Prince Michael, the Patriarch and all the dignitaries of the state followed the coffin. An empty carriage represented the King.

Within a month the government had news of further plots designed to throw the country into turmoil. A conspiracy to murder General Marinescu, the Minister of Public Security, was circumvented almost at the moment before its execution. A new purge followed, so extensive that it seemed as if the Iron Guard must have received a blow from which it could not recover. Had it not been the instrument of the Nazis, it could not have recovered. In no other wise could the Iron Guard have resurrected itself from the blows which the King now and Calinescu in his lifetime had dealt it. That it was the "secret weapon" of Hitler's war of under-

mining corrosion, the weakening of the nation by terror and revolt preparatory to its collapse and surrender to Nazi Germany, was now patent to Carol and his government. The money and the arms came from Nazi Germany which also supplied the technique and the training in terrorism and murder. That, too, Carol and his government knew and, therefore, there could be no doubt that the gravity of the outbursts of killings and rebellious plottings was less a matter of internal concern than a foreboding of the major menace of Germany. Hitler was on the rampage in Europe. "The Beast" of Carol's own description was running amok. That was the real significance of this latest orgy of blood in Roumania. Hitler had, in fact, made his attack on Carol.

On the whole, the attack failed and its failure was due to Carol's habitual strength and decision. It was not likely, however, that the Nazis would permit him any respite. That was Hitler's technique—give the victim no peace; if one line of attack fails, follow it up quickly with another; wear the victim down through constant and continuous pressure; sooner or later, he must become exhausted, and capitulate. The technique was put into operation as soon as it seemed that Carol had the upper hand and was in control of the internal situation. For a few brief weeks there was an appearance of quiet in Roumania. But Clodius was in Bucharest and he became busy again. The very speed and weight of the conquest of Poland made imperative the acquisition of Roumania's oil by Germany. The Luftwaffe and the panzer divisions were insatiable.

To oppose Clodius Carol dismissed General Argesheanu as Prime Minister and replaced him by Constantin Argetoianu, a most astute politician and businessman known in Roumania as "Argetoianu the Cynic". Clodius began in the usual way with demands for heavy increases in deliveries of oil to Germany. Through the Minister of National Economy, Bujoiu, he proposed a complete revision of the trade system between Roumania and Germany, the most significant suggestion being the alteration—to Germany's advantage—of the exchange rate between the two countries. The Roumanian Government refused the suggestion and Bujoiu resigned—but Clodius remained. Sensing fresh trouble, Carol called for another change of government and Georges Tatarascu became Prime Minister.

Tatarascu was an old hand at the Premiership to which he had succeeded, for the first time, after the murder of Duca. He was an inveterate enemy of the Iron Guard and, at one stage, dismissed 2,000 government officials for corrupt practices and association with the Iron Guard. He had been Ambassador in Paris and was staunchly pro-French, but in war politics he was a strenuous advocate of neutrality based on independence. He had earned the reputation of being "Carol's bulldog". His appointment to the Premiership was yet another effort on Carol's part to

demonstrate resistance to Nazi encroachment. That was understood in Berlin, if not in London, and that understanding was shown when Clodius promptly made fresh demands, more drastic than his previous proposals. This time, he insisted, in the name of his government, on almost a monopoly of all Roumania's exports. Tatarascu, politely but firmly, declined to accede.

There followed, during October and well into November, interchanges of proposal and counter-proposal, but nothing resulted. Suddenly, Nazi tactics switched the pressure to the international field in order to create new anxieties for Carol. Count Csaky, Hungary's Foreign Minister, made a speech on November 21 with reference to a Balkan "peace bloc" which was known to be Carol's plan and hope for keeping Hitler out of the Balkans and for averting war in South-East Europe. Csaky declared that there were three conditions precedent to such a bloc. First, co-operation between the Balkan States must not be directed against any third party. This was a clear allusion to Germany. Second, the differences between Hungary and her neighbours must be settled. This, obviously, referred to Hungary's claims for the return of Transylvania. Third, Hungary's full independence must be respected. He challenged Roumania in these words: "It depends on Roumania whether she is willing to tread the path of reality and co-operate in the reconstruction of a realist situation in the Danubian Basin or whether she will wait until the course of history achieves this." There could be no mistaking the menace of these words, undoubtedly dictated by Nazi Germany.

Semi-official statements in Bucharest announced Roumania's "pained surprise" at Csaky's declaration, but Carol gave orders that work on the frontier fortifications should be speeded up, especially at vulnerable points. Three days after Csaky's speech, reports flashed through Europe, initiated in Berlin but disseminated through neutral countries, that large German forces were being moved from the West and were concentrating "elsewhere". Goebbels' newspapers strongly attacked Roumania, declaring that the Tatarascu Government had been brought in by and was the creature of Britain and France and that Roumania's neutrality was a farce. While claiming that "all that Germany wants is a free hand to carry on reciprocal trade with Roumania", the Nazi Press alleged that Roumania was intriguing behind Germany's back to induce Britain to take at least 60 per cent of Roumania's exports. Tatarascu replied that Roumanian policy was one of "strict neutrality, reconstruction and consolidation". He declared that the reorganisation of the military and material forces of the nation was being carried out solely in the interests of national defence and of strict neutrality. Berlin retorted: "The future political development of Roumania is awaited with some scepticism in German political circles."

What this meant was made evident, almost immediately. On November 28, it was announced that Clodius had presented demands that Roumania should debase her currency in favour of Germany. He proposed that Roumania should fix the exchange rate at 56 lei to the mark, instead of the current 46. He added a threat that if this proposal were to be refused, Germany would raise the price of her goods against Roumania by 24 per cent. Italy was induced to take a hand in the game of forcing Roumania to surrender her oil and grain to the Axis. Rome made proposals to Bucharest offering to build on favourable terms a fleet of light craft for the Black Sea in exchange for oil and wheat. The move was transparent—to provide Germany with a Black Sea fleet and to transport the produce to Germany. Fabricius, the German Minister, conferred with Tatarascu; Angelescu, the Roumanian Minister of Economics, had discussions with Clodius. Tatarascu stood firm for economic independence and respect for existing trade obligations. He countered the German-Italian demands by offering France an agreement to supply 50,000 tons of oil a month, instead of the 375,000 tons a year provided by the existing Franco-Roumanian trade agreement. Roumania would take French raw materials in exchange. The new agreement was concluded.

At the same time, Carol essayed to awaken the British Government to the dangers of Axis pressure on him and to indicate his anxiety and fears that he might not be able to hold out against it. The Foreign Office announced that: "The Prime Minister's statement that Roumania is prepared to defend her neutrality arouses sympathy in this country, and when he refers to Roumania's economic difficulties M. Tatarascu is certainly not unaware of the fact that the British Government hopes, in due course, to be able to help in solving some part of them." The super-cautious piety of that statement was noted with dismay in Bucharest. It was noted also in Berlin and the Nazi response was that Clodius urgently requested "negotiations" on the basis that Roumania should export to Germany all her available resources of vegetable oils, including sunflower seeds of which Germany was normally the largest buyer.

On November 29, Tatarascu took occasion to make a broadcast speech to the nation, dealing with all Roumania's problems. He declared: "There will be no revision of Roumania's frontiers. We shall defend all that we have inherited from our ancestors." He reaffirmed Roumania's determination to remain neutral in the struggle between Germany and the Western powers. "Roumania is undergoing a period of economic stress but the Government is determined to remedy the situation. The reason for our difficulties is our effort to strengthen the country's defences." He estimated that £50,000,000 would be required for "special expenditure on

defence", and explained that: "The reorganisation of Roumania's technical equipment must be speeded up in order that the country may be able to rely on her own resources. We shall not be caught unawares." He addressed a warning to the rebellious elements within the country: "The special measures which have been taken to maintain public order, will be kept in force."

The challenge to Hungary—and Germany—was answered two days later, on December 1, the anniversary of Transylvania's union with Roumania under the Treaty of Trianon. Count Csaky denounced the Treaty and said: "At the time when the Peace Treaties are being broken down, Roumania cannot be the only state to profit from the war." The statement caused a sensation as well as consternation in Bucharest. The lips were the lips of Hungary but the voice was the voice of Germany—as were the threats. Along with Csaky's speech came reports to the Roumanian Government of renewed Iron Guard activity and of large-scale insurrectionary conspiracy, together with troop concentrations on the Hungarian side of the frontier. A remarkable and wholly unexpected thing followed. Roumania learned that Eugene Bianu, the Chief of the Security General, and General Marinescu, the Chief of Police, had been dismissed. These men had been responsible for the arrest and execution of Calinescu's murderers. The official explanation was that the dismissals were due to their failure to provide safeguards for the safety of Calinescu and to take adequate measures which should have prevented the crime. In fact, the strange move was an effort to appease Roumania's enemies. Carol was apparently being shaken, at last.

The same day, Clodius informed the Roumanians that his government had instructed him to demand the whole of the oil resources of the country above her own requirements. This meant the supply of some 4,500,000 tons annually. At the same time, the Soviet Press called for a Russian-Roumanian Non-Aggression Pact and complained of Roumania's oppression of her minorities. There were reports of Russian concentrations on the Bessarabian frontier. Roumania thereupon entered into an agreement with Russia to re-open the railway line between Cernauti and Lwow in Soviet-occupied Poland for the passage of merchandise only; the rolling stock was promised by Germany. On December 6, it was announced that Germany had bought 135,000 out of a total 500,000 shares in the Roumanian I.R.D.P. Oil Company and that negotiations were in progress with another Roumanian company for the purchase of extensive oil-bearing lands held by it.

The pace grew faster. Clodius complained angrily that he was unable to get out of Roumania the large quantities of food and oil products that he had ordered. He denounced vehemently Roumania's treachery in chartering to Britain all the country's

barges and tugs and, especially, the Roumanian Government's ban on the export of foodstuffs. One of Clodius's colleagues, Professor Reinhardt, put forward an astonishing proposal. He claimed the return to Germany of 4,000 wagon-loads of oil, belonging to Britain, which had been seized by the Germans during the invasion of Roumania in the last war. When Germany retreated, he urged, the wagon-loads had to be left behind and Roumania resumed possession. This quantity of oil, said the professor, belonged to Germany and should now be returned to the Reich. Tatarascu replied that, ethically, the oil should be returned to Britain and he abruptly rejected the professor's impudently naïve proposal.

Clodius pressed for more oil and food and a lowering of the exchange rate. He flew to and from Berlin, Budapest and Bucharest. The Italians urged and were accorded a fresh trade agreement to improve trade relations between Italy and Roumania. That involved further deliveries of oil to Italy, and it was well known that they were intended for a German destination. The first of a series of trains loaded with sunflower seeds and wood pulp left Cernauti for Soviet Poland. Fires broke out at a number of British-owned oil wells in Roumania and the German radio accused Roumania of conniving at the sabotage work of the British Secret Service agents whose crimes were directed at preventing Roumanian oil from reaching Germany.

On December 22, a new Trade Agreement between Germany and Roumania was signed at Bucharest. It provided for a new lei-mark exchange rate, 49 lei to the mark for Roumanian sales to Germany, 50 for her purchases. This meant a 20 per cent improvement in favour of Germany. The agreement provided for the export to Germany of 138,000 tons of oil monthly, one-third of Roumania's total production; it provided also that Germany should take over Roumania's pre-war arms contracts with Czechoslovakia and that payment for the supplies of armaments to Roumania should be made in oil deliveries to Germany.

Carol was well within the economic grip of Hitler.

CHAPTER XVI

CAROL IN HITLER'S TRAP

ALL QUIET, BEWILDERINGLY quiet, on the Western Front, in the most dreaded of all wars, as the year 1939 passed into 1940. Hitler had not yet unfolded his plan for the much-vaunted conquest of Europe and kept the world guessing whether he would turn East or West or whether the whole thing was not,

in fact, the "phoney war" of America's impatient war correspondents who could not find "a story" in the curiously peaceful battlefield of Western Europe. Indeed, since the conquest of Poland, the only country which had felt anything of the Fuehrer's fury was the distant Balkan state of Roumania, against which the "nerve war", at least, had been exclusively directed, so far. Germany's economic pressure, Hungary's threats, Bulgarian demands, Russia's reported moves with regard to Bessarabia, the Nazi-infested Iron Guard's terrorism; all induced the general belief that Hitler's plan for the major aggression would evolve itself in the East, against Roumania. Carol shared that belief and was alarmed.

Between the last week of December, 1939, and the first week of January, 1940, the King made a tour of Roumania's defence system. He began with Transylvania, continued into Bessarabia and ended his journey at the Black Sea. In each district he uttered warnings and defiance directed, in turn, to the nearest neighbour—to Hungary, Bulgaria and Russia. On Christmas Day, at Oradea in Transylvania, after inspecting the troops guarding the frontier, he addressed a message to his army: "Some people may say that to-day's ceremony is curious. This is the day for praising the One who preached peace and goodwill throughout the world. Yet, on the same day, I come in the midst of those who carry arms which kill. The purpose of My Army, however, is not to hanker after that which is not ours, but, with peaceful intentions, to defend firmly that which is Roumanian."

On New Year's Day, he was at Constanza, on the shores of the Black Sea, reviewing the coastal defence forces and the Navy and, in another speech, he declared: "Roumania will never cede an inch of her territory to anyone." On January 6, with the Crown Prince Michael, he was at Chisinau, among the soldiers and inhabitants of Bessarabia. After a solemn service at the cathedral and the Epiphany blessing of the waters, he spoke at a reception at the Third Army Corps Headquarters:

"Every time I come to this corner of the earth, between the Prush and the Dniester, I assure you that I do not come to a country which has been re-attached to Roumania but to a country which has been, is, and always will be Roumanian land. The cities which have, for centuries, been the sentinels of a frontier must, for us all, whether here or in other parts of the Roumanian land, be the sentinels of what will eternally remain Roumanian.

"I was touched by the words addressed to me by the minorities of this part of the country.

"I am certain that all those who live in this region and all Roumanians throughout the country are resolved to remain united. This unity of thought and sentiments will never tolerate an attempt on Roumania. This thought should fortify our hearts. My army

should, in its turn, be so strengthened that no enemy will ever be able to trample on what is sacredly and eternally Roumanian."

During the following week, Carol was at Belgrade in conference with Prince Paul of Yugoslavia with whom he discussed the recent meeting at Venice between Count Ciano, Foreign Minister of Italy, and Count Csaky of Hungary. It was given out that Italy had offered to come to the aid of Carol in the event of an attack by Russia, provided that Roumania would accept Italian leadership in the Balkans. Carol, it was stated, declined the Italian offer not only in the interests of peace and neutrality but because he was unwilling to take up an attitude of hostility towards Russia which would so interpret an acceptance of Italy's "protection". He was understood to have informed Prince Paul that he would refuse any territorial concession to Hungary or to any other power either then or at the end of the war.

These defiances, sincere enough in their intention, nevertheless merely betrayed Carol's nervousness. Hitler was still pursuing his Roumanian victim, now seriously perturbed and unable to see how to escape from the Nazi clutches. Characteristically, Hitler accepted the partial surrender of Carol under the Trade Pact of December only as an excuse for further demands. There was still no evidence that Britain and France fully appreciated the grip Hitler was pressing on the economic and, through it, the political throat of Roumania or that they were willing to extricate Carol from the stranglehold. On the contrary, some elements in the government and political spheres in the Western democracies actually declared their suspicion that Carol was deliberately entering the Nazi den. There was no suggestion, however, from any quarter, that they had done anything to prevent such a possibility, and, at least, there were no complaints that Carol was showing ingratitude for encouragement offered or assistance rendered by his Western friends. There was nothing for which Carol need have been grateful.

It was this suspicion, coupled with anger, which greeted the news on January 17 that Carol had signed a decree placing all foreign-owned Roumanian oil companies under government control and had followed it by another decree extending that control over Roumanian iron and steel production and setting up a Commission with full powers over all steel mills, iron foundries, metallurgical works and even the purchase of scrap iron. There were persistent reports, too, that the Roumanians had secretly agreed, under the pressure of Clodius who threatened that Germany would regard a refusal as a breach of neutrality, to sell to the Nazis almost the whole of Roumania's exportable oil. Clodius made a further threat, that should Roumania commit this "breach of neutrality", the Nazis would "abandon" her to her revisionist neighbours, Hungary, Russia and Bulgaria. The threat was softened by a

German "concession" to the effect that, if Carol agreed to hand over his country's oil, the Nazis would give a pledge to protect Roumania from Hungary and Bulgaria, and probably, Russia. Carol countered with a threat to form a Balkan defence bloc. To this the Nazis replied that he would then be forced to make territorial concessions to the revisionist states. In the end, Carol felt compelled to go the middle way, in other words, to appease, and this, ultimately, led him to disaster. His compromise was the decree promulgating control of the oil and other production of potential war material. This was, clearly, a victory for Hitler because the concentration of war industry under government control made Nazi pressure and control easy to effect; and so it was. Carol was completely out-manceuvred. He believed he was holding off his persecutor; in fact, he had made Roumania, economically, a vassal state of Germany.

The repercussion in the West was immediate and unfavourable to Roumania. It was stated in London that the whole economic policy of the Allies towards Roumania would have to be reconsidered, which was another way of saying that she should be treated, economically, if not politically, as an enemy state. London was now patently mistrustful of Carol. The control of oil production was particularly distasteful because the greater part of the Roumanian production was in the hands of British, French, Dutch and American companies. It was said in London that German bombers which attacked Allied shipping in the North Sea were using Roumanian oil put at the disposal of Goering's Luftwaffe by the willing Carol. Roumania's reply was that even after the outbreak of war, certain foreign companies in Roumania had delivered considerable quantities of oil to Germany on the pretext that they were honouring past business obligations and that it was better to get cash for the oil in the storage tanks in Roumania than to take the risk of their being blown up by sabotage or bombing.

That the surrender to Germany on the trade front was not the only evidence that Carol was being thoroughly and effectively blackmailed by Hitler was clearly implied in the announcement, made almost simultaneously, that, by the order of Tatarascu, some hundreds of members of the Iron Guard had been released from prison after signing a pledge of allegiance to King Carol. This was described in Bucharest as an act of "internal appeasement" with no relation to foreign policy. In order to allay the now openly-expressed suspicion in Britain and France that Carol had moved in the direction of Nazi Germany, it was emphasised that there would be no change in Roumania's external relations. There were dangers, however, in the gesture of conciliation towards the Fifth Column Iron Guard. By this time, "appeasement", in itself, was a derelict and discredited political device and bore too many ominous implications in the wider field of international relations.

More perilous was the fact that many Iron Guardist leaders who had been outlawed and fled to Germany, were still in the Nazi Third Reich. Neither the peril nor the suspicion were removed by the explanation of Carol's government that the amnesty concerned only those Iron Guard members who were inside Roumania and that the return and pardon of the others was "another matter".

The release of a few hundred Iron Guard prisoners was but the beginning of a series of startling concessions to German intimidation. These concessions were yielded in a field much wider and more fraught with danger to the Roumanian state than that of trade and finance, although, in accordance with Nazi methods, both fields formed "one front" for the assault upon the independence of a prospective victim state. It was observed in Roumania that, despite the official limitation of the January amnesty to prisoners within the country, there followed a steady stream of Iron Guard "legionaries" returning from Germany. These were the traitors, the plotters and the assassins who had fled and sought refuge among the Nazis from the wrath of Carol during the great purge following the murder of Calinescu; many were the outlawed and convicted traitors of previous insurrectionary conspiracies. The number of Iron Guardists who were allowed to re-enter the country was estimated at some thousands. Among them were the most desperate and dangerous of the Iron Guard criminals, fresh from the terror schools of Himmler's Gestapo and the colleges of Goebbels' subversive propaganda service.

During February, Roumania hummed with reports that consultations had been in progress between the Iron Guard and the government. At first, the reports were denied, but they proved to have been well founded. On March 15, Carol and his government made a complete *volte face* with regard to the policy of eliminating the treasonable organisation from the conduct of the state. Preceding the announcement of this change of front, it was stated that the Iron Guard leaders had given a solemn pledge of loyalty to the Crown and the National Renaissance Front. In return, the Government offered full rehabilitation of the outlaws. The amnesty was extended to all past and present members of the Iron Guard, both within Roumania and without. Concentration camps housing Iron Guard suspects were to be abolished and their inmates freed. Thousands of officials who had been dismissed by reason of their connection or association with the Iron Guard were to be reinstated, some "with honour". Dependents of executed or otherwise killed terrorists were promised the pensions normally granted to the relatives of officials in the public services who had honourably done duty to the state. In some cases, payment by way of "damages" for the loss of relatives was to be given. Under these concessions, even the relatives of Calinescu's assassins benefited. So far did the new policy go that the bodies of these cold-blooded killers which had been thrown into a common murderers' grave were exhumed and accorded

burial in consecrated ground and with full religious rites. The body of Codreanu was, soon afterwards, disinterred from its prison grave and re-buried with full ceremony, even with pomp.

The surprise and consternation in Roumania and abroad were not allayed by the official explanations of this astonishing development. The signed protestations of Iron Guard loyalty to the King and his government, posted up conspicuously in public places throughout the country, were pathetically unconvincing. The Government declarations that the rehabilitation of the terrorists and their new co-operation with the régime were made necessary "in view of the international conflagration" and were "directed at easing the international tension", were received with cynicism and disbelief, intensified by the official suggestion that the Iron Guard had always been loyal to the Crown.

No one knew better than King Carol how great were the dangers involved in the readmission to the state of Hitler's Roumanian army of gangster traitors. He was not so blind as to be unaware of the accusations of treachery that the democratic enemies of Nazi Germany would level at him. He could have no illusions about the insincerity—and the untruthfulness—of his government's professions in relation to the reinstatement of the Iron Guard. He had even fewer illusions about the professions of Iron Guard loyalty to him. But he knew what his unhelpful friends in the West did not appear to realise—that the new policy was not his willing decision but the inescapable consequence of Hitler's coercion and menaces, of the crass neglect of the democracies to understand Roumania's peril and of their failure to provide him with the means to resist Nazi pressure. He was quite well aware that he had mortgaged himself and his country to the Nazi devil and that the devil would sooner or later foreclose. He had essayed the bankrupt policy of appeasement, with the inevitable consequences.

Carol knew that Hitler had taken good note of the fact that the terrific onslaught on the Iron Guard, after Calinescu's murder, was a full scale assault on the whole fabric of the Nazi organisation to smash Carol's state from within as a prelude to Hitler's direct attack upon it from without. It was Hitler who had demanded the reinstatement of the Iron Guard and there was plenty of menace behind the demand. If, in face of a full-scale British and French Guarantee, Hitler had overrun and devastated the more bellicose, better prepared and more united state of Poland, how much easier to intimidate the more docile, unready and disunited Roumania? Carol had his guarantee, but there was much less enthusiasm, and of late, a good deal of suspicion, behind it. Hitler knew that, too. His armoured beasts of prey, on land and in the air, were poised ready to spring, on the easier victim first, in all probability.

Was there any way of escape for Carol? He could fight, of course. That would have been heroic, but suicidal; he had a brave but

mechanically weak army; he reigned over a nation sabotaged and riddled with treachery. "Carol's Dyke" was not yet ready, even if it were effective against the panzer divisions and the Luftwaffe. Carol could not escape.

The King put the best face he could on the dilemma and the danger of the new situation. Indeed, he found a subtle, though shallow answer for what had happened. He excused his about-turn to his Iron Guard enemies by explaining that, in admitting the Iron Guard to his national party and restoring its members to citizenship and honour, he had extinguished effectively the Iron Guard as an instrument of dissension and revolt. He believed, or professed to believe, that he had dealt a master stroke of political sagacity by achieving national unity at a most critical moment in Roumanian history. At best, this reasoning was naïve; it was the wishful thinking of a man already nerve-racked and unable to escape the clutches of his arch-enemy. He did not seem to realise that he had yielded up every stronghold of his internal defences to the best organised and most powerfully armed of all Hitler's Fifth Column armies. If he did realise it, he had no alternative but to submit and hope for the best.

If Carol really believed that he had countered Nazi machinations to disrupt his country, he was quickly disillusioned. Goebbels' propaganda machine worked overtime in asserting boastfully and, for Carol, disconcertingly, that the entry of the Iron Guard into Carol's National Renaissance Front was a triumph for Hitler. It claimed that Germany was responsible for the "reconciliation". It declared with characteristically bluffing mendacity that the Nazi Reich was "promoting peace in the Balkans" and intended to give Roumania security by endeavouring to arrange either a Soviet-Roumanian Non-Aggression Pact or a three-party treaty between Germany, Russia and Roumania. Moreover, on the instructions of Berlin, Germans in Roumania declared knowingly that the Reich herself would shortly offer Roumania a guarantee of her frontiers. Germany's frontiers, the propagandists said, did not "run" with those of Roumania and the effect of such a guarantee would be to prevent Hungary or Russia from pressing their territorial claims against Roumania.

The intention of the propaganda was, of course, to sow dissension and create further suspicion between Carol and the democracies in the West. The Nazis were implanting the idea in Roumanian minds that Carol should renounce the British Guarantee and replace it by Nazi "protection". However, nothing came of this "feeler" of Nazi magnanimity. Nor did it matter, for Carol was already entrapped in the Nazi morass. And he knew it. Yet, he still hoped for salvation from the West, when the might of Britain and France would inflict on Hitler the full measure of punishment for his crimes.

A STATE IN RUINS

AN IMPOSING ASSEMBLY of the Corps Diplomatique accredited to the Court of Roumania, in the full ceremonial panoply appropriate to a state occasion, watched King Carol the Second review his troops on the parade ground of the Cotroceni Palace on the brilliantly sunny morning of May 10, 1940. The King, accompanied by the Crown Prince, and magnificent in flashing silver helmet and great cloak with the crimson Cross of the Order of Michael the Brave draped lavishly over his big white horse, gravely took the salute. It was a gallant display of imposing detachments of the new Roumanian army. Powerful guns and tanks rolled heavily before the Royal Commander-in-Chief and aeroplanes roared overhead. Carol appeared proud. The new army was the creation of his initiative; his energy and enthusiasm had been chiefly responsible for its mechanisation and better equipment. It was a creditable achievement having regard to the resources at his disposal. He evinced a special interest in the detachments of the engineer battalions representing the men at work on the frontier fortifications. "Carol's Dyke" was in an advanced state of completion.

Just as the King was dismounting from his horse at the conclusion of the review, an Aide-de-Camp was seen to hurry across the parade ground bearing in his hand a sheaf of telegrams which he handed to Carol. He looked grave as he read the messages, turned to the Corps Diplomatique, saluted and hurried to his waiting motor car. He drove to the Palace in Bucharest, went directly to his study and summoned the Prime Minister, and the Minister for War. He called Ernest Urdareanu, the Lord Great Chamberlain. There were many and long consultations throughout that day.

The news in the telegrams delivered at the parade ground informed Carol that, at dawn that morning, Hitler had invaded Holland and Belgium and that his armies were pouring towards the North-East frontiers of France. The war in the West had begun. Throughout the day the messages from Carol's envoys in London, Paris, Brussels and the Hague told of Hitler's tanks sweeping across the eastern provinces of the Netherlands and Belgium, of his heavy bombers hurling high explosives on Rotterdam and Brussels, of his parachutists dropping on the aerodromes and fields round them, of the tornado of death and destruction that Nazi Germany had let loose upon Western Europe.

Carol and his advisers reviewed the momentous import of the Nazi invasion in the West and its probable consequences to Roumania. They discussed the military and political effects on Eastern

Europe of victory or defeat on either side in this greatest clash of mechanised might. It was observed that Carol emerged from these conferences more sprightly and happier than he had been for a long time. He appeared to be more confident in manner than he had been since the outbreak of war. The first shock of the news had made him anxious but he seemed to have shaken that off. The reason was that, whichever way he considered the situation and weighed up its possibilities, he saw inevitable victory for the Allies and the hope of peace and security for his realm and himself. He shared with so many of Europe's strategists and statesmen the conviction that the Maginot Line was an impenetrable barrier against any German mechanised avalanche; with her five millions of well-armed men, France would be more than a match for Hitler's new armies as yet untried against a foe matched against them in strength of numbers and led by the reputedly shrewdest military minds in the world. Then there were British resource and tenacity, as well as her unequalled potential strength, which made the British Commonwealth the formidable enemy with whom, in his *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had warned the Germans always to avoid a conflict. To Carol it was not merely a question of loyal affinities and sympathies with the Western democracies, especially Britain, which gave him the assurance of inevitable Allied victory. It was a matter of calculation, too.

When he turned to the position at home, he found the prospects less to his satisfaction. True, he had the National Renaissance Front, but the unity of the nation was of a precariously unreal character and had been bought at the stiff price of concession, if not of surrender to the worst elements in the state. The dangers were obvious. The part the Iron Guard was destined by Hitler to play in Roumania had been most painfully evident since the Nazi invasion of Denmark and Norway. That unhappy event had revealed the new Nazi conception of warfare—treacherous burrowings from within as a prelude to assault from without. Here was the "secret weapon" of which Hitler himself had boasted to Carol at Berchtesgaden; indeed, it had turned out to be a deadly instrument of the surrender and betrayal of whole nations. This, the Fifth Column, had replaced the long range shellings of the German Big Berthas of the last war as the preliminary of the mass assaults of infantry and tank; the results were much speedier and more devastating.

Yet, on the whole, Carol was more content than he had been for many months. He saw the conflict in the West as the way of his salvation from the long persecuting pressure of the Nazis to deprive him of his authority and his state of its independence. He had full faith and no doubt that the destruction of Hitler must be the outcome of the gigantic struggle that had begun and he held an unswerving confidence that his own liberation was now, at least,

possible. At all events, Carol was relieved that his immediate anxieties were suspended. Hitler had turned, after all, to the West and there was bound to be respite, therefore, for the ruler who had borne, for so many months, the exactions, the menaces, the depredations of the insatiable and merciless Nazi Fuehrer and the treacherous disloyalty of his terrorist mercenaries of the Iron Guard.

It was but a fleeting moment of hope for Carol. In little more than four weeks the struggle in the West was over. Holland and Belgium in the maw of Hitler. The Maginot Line contemptuously brushed aside by the advancing hordes of his masses of iron and steel. The sweep of the Nazi armies to the North Sea coast, incredible in its speed and frightful in its ferocity. The death and desolation from the skies. The pitiful flight of millions of terrified refugees blocking the paths of their own retreating soldiers and providing easy and defenceless targets for the bombs and machine guns of the merciless Luftwaffe. Paris undefended and surrendered to the Nazis of Germany—the capital of Revolutionary France lost without the firing of a shot. The crumbling of the great armies of the Republic and their scattering like chaff before the storm. The capitulation of Leopold of Belgium. The retreat of Britain's army to the Channel ports. Dunkirk. The surrender of the French Republic and the flight of her government. Humiliating armistice. The shrunken Pétain, with the servile Fifth Column lackeys of France's hereditary foe, yielding up two-thirds of his country and her citizens to the thralldom of Hitler. Laval, Darlan, Flandin and the rest grovelling at the feet of the Nazi Fuehrer and his henchmen, clutching the crumbs of power for further betrayal. The Old Men of Vichy. Emasculated, beaten, bewildered France. The French Revolution in the black shadow of the "New Order". Great Britain threatened with invasion. Chamberlain and the "appeasers" of Munich discredited. Churchill as Prime Minister rallying the British nation to fight on the beaches, in the cities, in the villages and in the streets in defence of Motherland and liberty.

June 8 was a day of sadness for Carol. It was the tenth anniversary of his reign and he had anticipated with much eagerness the event which marked a stage in his life as King. He had accomplished much, endured much. He had planned to make the anniversary a great national occasion. He had thought to make the event symbolic of the unity of People and Throne and to give it the character of a new bond binding the nation closer to him. There were to be pomp and ceremony and pageantry appropriate to a day of national rejoicing. Carol had hoped too, that even the enemies among his subjects would join with him in celebrating the decade of his rule and, because of the heavy shadows that had fallen over Europe, would see, in the event, the need for loyalty, if not for confidence in him.

The titanic struggle that was waging in the West, with the forces of

Europe's democratic civilisation retreating before the might of Nazi reaction, obliterated the day of anniversary as an occasion for rejoicing. At Carol's own request there were no public celebrations. He wrote to his Prime Minister: "Those who wish to please me on this occasion should work to strengthen further the defences of the country." The only outward manifestation of national sentiment were the eulogies in the Press in which Carol was described, in almost fulsome terms, as the great leader of Roumania and her hope for the future. He was hailed as "Our Renaissance King". Carol was naturally pleased with these expressions of fealty and tribute to his work for his country but he was most heartened and genuinely delighted by the letter of congratulation which he received from King George VI of Great Britain, who wrote:

"YOUR MAJESTY, On the tenth anniversary of Your Majesty's accession to the throne of Roumania I should like to convey to you my warm congratulations and my good wishes for the future of your country.

"I have watched with respect and admiration the efforts which Your Majesty and the Roumanian Government are making to preserve the independence and the neutrality of Roumania, and I wish you continued success in these efforts. It is my earnest hope that Roumania will be spared the horrors of war, and thus will be able to continue uninterrupted the achievements of progress and development which have been so remarkable under Your Majesty's enlightened rule.

"I have learned with keen interest of the growing collaboration between the Balkan countries and their increasing determination to resist aggression from whatever quarter it may come. I feel sure that this unity of purpose is of supreme value at the present time and that nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of its further development.

"The trials through which my people are now passing have only served to strengthen our resolve to continue the struggle in which we are now engaged. We are bearing a very heavy burden in our fight for the liberties of mankind, but we have never entertained the slightest doubt that we shall achieve victory and thus enable the peoples of this continent to enjoy a peace of justice and freedom. As my Prime Minister has recently expressed it, 'Conquer we must, conquer we shall'.

"I convey to you my heartfelt good wishes for the prosperity of Your Majesty, Your Majesty's family and the kingdom of Roumania, I am, etc.

"GEORGE R.I."

To Carol this was no conventional letter suitable to a special occasion in a foreign state. He read into it a statement of high

policy at a supremely critical moment in Europe's destiny. He saw, in its carefully worded terms, a more than formal cordiality and he derived much encouragement from it. He was particularly happy to note the tribute to his "achievements of progress and development which have been so remarkable under Your Majesty's enlightened rule" and his happiness was all the greater because he was certain that the words had been phrased with real sincerity.

By the end of the third week of June, 1940, Hitler bestrode the Continent of Europe; from the Arctic Circle to Bordeaux, the entire coastline marked the western frontier of his dominion; laterally, his realm stretched from the North Sea to the Vistula. Save for the Baltic States, Spain, Switzerland and the Balkans the god of Nazi paganism held undisputed mastery over all Christian Europe's sovereign nations. Except as prisoners of war, there was not a single soldier of Britain on the Continent. Monarchs, Ministers, soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilians were in flight, on the sea and in the air, in the narrow space between Europe and the small island of Britain. The whole world reeled under the reverberating crash of European civilisation, dynamited by Teuton barbarism. As the dull death-echoing thunder of the collapse of the Western democracies rolled over Eastern Europe, men and rulers trembled and were afraid. If the mighty powers of the West had fallen prostrate, in a matter of days, before the Nazi Juggernaut, what chance had the miniature states of the East? Amid the cataclysm, none was more helpless and terror-stricken than Roumania.

Carol judged his position to be hopeless. He saw Britain, his guarantor, withdrawn from the Continent and preparing feverishly, but with grim resolution, to take her stand in resistance against the most ambitious of all Nazi purposes, Hitler's much trumpeted invasion of the British Isles. That the attempt would be made seemed certain. The Fuehrer had let it be known that by September 15, in Buckingham Palace, he would receive the capitulation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain. Two months from the conquest of France was all the time he required for preparation and achievement of the final assault on the major foe. That the invasion of Britain was likely to be successfully accomplished, seemed more than a possibility. The entire armament of Britain's Expeditionary Armies in Belgium and France was in the hands of the enemy. Few of the scanty Royal Air Force which had fought, one against scores, a hopeless battle in the skies of France, had returned to their bases at home. To Carol, as to all the world, only two prospects remained for Britain, a humiliating peace or inescapable defeat.

Both the enemies and friends of Carol saw only one way out of the critical situation which faced Roumania—to make the best of a perilous position by accepting the fact of Hitler's triumphant mastery of the European Continent and to integrate Roumania within that actuality. There seemed no other way to save Roumania, no

other hope of extricating from the ruins of Western Europe some semblance of national existence than by seeking the tolerance, if not the goodwill, of the Nazi Fuehrer.

On June 21, the unfortunate Carol took the first step towards the surrender of his state to Hitler. He announced the creation of *Partidul Natsiunei*, the Party of the Nation, and, in the direction of the party, the Iron Guard was given a prominent place. Horia Sima was its leading representative. Two days afterwards Carol explained that his "Corporative State" had been replaced by a Totalitarian Régime and that this was the purport of the formation of the Party of the Nation. It became known that Hitler had insisted on the major participation in it of the Iron Guard. Roumania was now well within the Nazi orbit and well on the way to vassalage under the overlordship of Hitler who had now entered on the second phase of his plan for the conquest of Carol's kingdom through its political mastery; the first, its economic enslavement, was already completed through his control of the oil resources and the production of other primary war materials.

It was clear that, having secured his position in the West and checkmated any possibility of any move by the democracies, Hitler was now ready for the preparatory stage, at least, of the *Drang nach Osten*. It could only be a matter of time, therefore, for Roumania to fall and for its investment by the Third Reich. The first to see the implications of Carol's declaration of a Totalitarian Régime was Soviet Russia. Within two days of Carol's first overt act of submission to Hitler, Moscow took a step designed, as later events showed, as a protection of the Russian southern frontier against the eastern encroachment of Hitler but having the immediate effect of striking a mortal blow at Carol's prestige and authority and the stability of his realm. Soviet Russia issued an ultimatum to Roumania to surrender Bessarabia. At 10 p.m. on June 26, Molotov, Chairman of the Council of Peoples Commissars of the U.S.S.R., handed to the Roumanian Minister in Moscow, Davidescu a Note stating that "the Soviet Union considers it necessary and timely in the interests of restoration of justice to take up jointly with Roumania the immediate settlement of the question of the restoration of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union. The Government of the U.S.S.R. considers that the question of the restoration of Bessarabia is organically bound up with the question of the transfer to the Soviet Union of that part of Bukovina's population which in its overwhelming majority is bound with Soviet Ukraine. . . .

"The Government of the U.S.S.R. proposes to the Royal Government of Roumania, first, restore Bessarabia to the Soviet Union; second, transfer to the Soviet Union Northern Bukovina within boundaries shown on the appended map.

"The Government of the U.S.S.R. expresses the hope that the Royal Government of Roumania will accept these proposals of the

U.S.S.R. and thus will create the possibility of peaceful settlement of a protracted conflict between the U.S.S.R. and Roumania.

"The Government of the U.S.S.R. awaits the reply of the Royal Government of Roumania in the course of the day June 27."

On June 27, Roumania, through Davidescu, informed Molotov of her willingness "to proceed to friendly discussion with common accord of all proposals emanating from the Soviet Government" and requesting negotiations. At the same time, Davidescu explained that his Government's reply signified its consent to the Russian proposals, and Molotov, in a further Note, proposed, "First, that within four days . . . Roumanian troops evacuate the territory of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Second, that within the same period Soviet troops occupy the territory of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Third, that within the day June 28 Soviet troops occupy Cernauti, Chisinau and Akkerman. . . . The Soviet Government insists that the Royal Government of Roumania reply to the above proposals not later than noon on June 28".

At 11 a.m. on June 28 Roumania replied that

"To preserve the possibility of avoiding the serious consequences which would result from the application of force and the outbreak of hostilities to this part of Europe, the Roumanian Government finds itself obliged to accept the conditions of evacuation contained in the Soviet reply".

Thus the territories which, six months earlier, Carol had declared "would eternally remain Roumanian" were no longer within his sovereignty. Carol could do no other than accept this restoration to Russia. Within a few hours about 20,000 square miles of land and about 3,500,000 inhabitants were transferred from Roumanian to Soviet rule. "Carol's Dyke", like the Maginot Line, was of no more avail than a construction of tinsel and paper.

Though the terms of the British Guarantee did not specifically cover this contingency, Carol might have invoked, and did, in fact, consider invoking, the aid of Britain in resistance to this incursion into his territory. Deliberately, and despite the counsel of many of his advisers and supporters, he refrained from asking Britain to help. Apart from the obvious difficulty, if not the impossibility, of securing effective assistance, he realised how critical was Britain's own position, defeated in France and Belgium, denuded of armament, beleaguered and menaced by imminent invasion. Carol refused to create a situation of further embarrassment for Great Britain whose people were being adjured by Winston Churchill to prepare for the supreme sacrifice in defence of their Motherland and whose enemies he had challenged defiantly to a struggle to the death "on the beaches, in the cities and in the streets".

The Russian reoccupation of Bessarabia was the cue for Carol's

foes within Roumania and abroad. In the country, the Iron Guard and their allies rose in simulated fury against this "desecration of the sacred soil of our nation" and roared against the King to whom so recently they had pledged their loyalty. They hurled accusations of his betrayal of his people to "the Bolshevik invaders" and charged him with having broken his oath to defend the integrity and sovereignty of the state whose throne he had inherited. They indicted him for having weakened the resistance of the country through his policy of faith in the good will and support of the western democracies, a policy which had proved so disastrously ineffective at every crucial occasion in the many crises of the recent past. There were demonstrations of hostility against a régime which, at so grave a moment, had yielded up, without a single blow against "the traditional and most dangerous enemy", the cherished land of their ancestors.

Nazi Germany, in turn, seized the occasion to twist the rope round the neck of Carol. Hitler demanded as token of good behaviour, as proof of non-hostility towards the Axis powers, as evidence of belief in his invincibility and as acceptance of his overlordship of Europe, that Roumania should renounce the Guarantee of Britain "before it became too late". No need now for Hitler to back his demand by verbal threats; the battlefields of western Europe and the prostrate nations on its shores were sufficiently grim in their menace. On the last day of June, the government of the pro-British Georges Tatarascu fell. In his place as Prime Minister came Ion Gigurtu, the reputed friend of Goering; with him as Foreign Minister was Mihail Manoilescu who boasted of his personal friendship with Benito Mussolini.

The combination was ominous for the political destiny of Roumania. Gigurtu was by profession a mining and civil engineer who, at one time, had acquired almost a monopoly of the gold mines of Transylvania. As Chairman of MICA, the largest Roumanian mining concern, his influence and power in the industrial economy of Roumania were unchallengeable. He had been largely responsible for the decree giving the Government control over the vital industries of the country and thereby making easier the German domination over them. Though a frequent and eager visitor to Paris, his German education gave him affinities towards Germany which his industrial interests enhanced. Never a popular figure, his persistent affection of a monocle and the mannerisms of the French, earned him the intense dislike of the Roumanians.

Manoilescu had long professed openly his admiration for Fascism and was one of the most fervent Roumanian disciples of the Italian system. Arrogant, pretentious and pedantic he had made himself the *Enfant Terrible* of post-war Roumania by reason of his professorial advocacy of new systems of national economy and development. Like Ion Antonescu, he had the firm conviction that he alone

possessed the correct formula by which affairs should be conducted. Yet, when he became Minister of Finance his tenure of office was short; he was a dismal failure. His pet theory was that as the product of one industrial worker was paid for by the output of ten agricultural labourers, agricultural nations like Roumania were destined to become the serfs of the industrial nations. This dogma made him *persona grata* with the Nazis whose political and economic philosophies divided Europe into industrial and agricultural zones, with Germany as the head and centre of industrial production and the other nations as her agricultural servitors. Manoilescu had, also, the faculty for political intrigue and was fertile in its promotion. In his earlier political career, he manifested an admiration for Carol during his exile and produced many ingenious but impracticable plans for his return. His admiration for the King changed to one of resentment when Carol declined to accept him as a political genius and kept him in the lower ranks of political eminence.

On July 1, Gigurtu proclaimed to the world that Roumania was, officially, a satellite of Germany. He renounced the British Guarantee. Manoilescu performed the second act of faith in Germany; simultaneously with the renunciation of the British Guarantee, came the news that Virgil Viorel Tilea had been dismissed from his post as Minister in London. For that move Germany had prepared the ground, in the Press and over the radio, by denouncing Tilea as "the tool of the Jews who engineered the disastrous British Guarantee".

The momentum of the decline towards Nazidom and enslavement by Hitler increased. On July 10 the Government announced the withdrawal of Roumania from the League of Nations. Three days later, Gigurtu proclaimed the adherence of his country to the Fascist Axis. Carol gave his formal approval to these expressions of the revolution of national policy. He did so because no other course lay open to him. The chaotic European situation now was that a request by Hitler, even a suggestion, was a "*Bewehl*," an order which only a strongly united nation or one with a predilection for suicide could refuse to obey.

It was not only German pressure which forced Carol to consent to the surrender to Hitler and his policies. There was deceit, as well. Hungary had become restive and arrogant since the collapse of France. She was demanding the fulfilment of her Transylvanian claims and the demands were truculent, in the extreme. There were not merely reports of Hungarian troop movements towards the Transylvanian frontier; the troops were actually moving. Both Gigurtu and Manoilescu represented to Carol that the only way in which to stave off Hungarian rapacity and to prevent bloodshed in Roumania was by accepting Hitler's demands for "collaboration" in return for which Hitler, they declared, had given assurance to support the Roumanians in the dispute with Hungary. To assure

Carol that the Nazi conqueror was acting in good faith, they informed the King that they had sought and been granted an interview with the Fuehrer. They told Carol, also, that Mussolini had promised his support and that they proposed to visit the Duce after their meeting with Hitler.

Gigurtu and Manoilescu made their obeisances to Hitler at Munich, on July 26. Two days afterwards they were at Rome in audience with Mussolini. When they returned to Bucharest they represented to Carol and the country that their visits to Munich and Rome had been something in the nature of a triumph for themselves and a fine success for Roumania. They had obtained assurances from Hitler personally, they declared, that he despised the Hungarians. The Fuehrer was anxious to preserve peace in the east of Europe and expressed himself as opposed to cession of Roumanian territory to Hungary. Hitler had magnanimously suggested a way out of the difficulty with the Hungarians. He had a plan which he offered to the Roumanians as a purely impartial and objective onlooker in a dispute in which he had no direct interest.

Hitler declared that the best way out of the crisis was by large exchanges of population without territorial readjustment. If Roumania would accept this solution, she could be certain of German support to induce Hungary to yield and that Germany would exercise the necessary influence on the "despised" Hungarians to restrain them from warlike action against Roumania. Gigurtu and Manoilescu indicated that, although the Fuehrer had not specifically promised to do so, they had the impression that he might even come to the aid of Roumania, should Hungary launch a war against her. So anxious was Hitler to be of service in their anxieties that he strongly counselled the Roumanians to propose immediate negotiations with the Hungarians and to offer them his suggested exchange of populations. At the same time, to ensure lasting peace in the Balkans, the benevolent Fuehrer suggested that Roumania should consider favourably the grant by Roumania of territorial concessions to Bulgaria.

Carol agreed to adopt his Ministers' advice that Hitler's friendly suggestion should be followed. The proposal for negotiations was made to the Hungarians and, on August 16, the Roumanians and Hungarian delegations met at the Roumanian town of Turnu-Severin, on the Danube. Simultaneously, negotiations were opened with the Bulgarians at Craiova.

The Hungarian delegates were truculent and rigid in their demands. The plan for exchange of populations did not appeal to them. They talked of Transylvania in terms of "the sacred heritage" and "eternal soil" of Hungary. They used many a well-tried phrase of Hitler in describing the iniquities of the Versailles and Trianon Treaties which had "robbed their country" of its

ancient land. The discussions were carried on in a far from conciliatory atmosphere, the Hungarians being well aware of the weakness of their opponents and that they, and not the Roumanians, had the support of Hitler. In fact, as later events proved, Hitler had performed one of his favourite frauds and tricks of chicanery; while adjuring the Roumanians to offer concessions, with the promise of his support, he had advised the Hungarians not to accept them. On the third day the negotiations were broken off.

Hitler thereupon disclosed his hand and his real purpose. He swept aside the pretence of benevolent impartiality as quickly and as easily as he had made it. He did not suggest that the parties should resume discussions, he ordered them to do so. He instructed both the Hungarians and Roumanians to send their Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers to Vienna and there to accept the compulsory arbitration of Germany and Italy. Gigurtu and Manoilescu obeyed the Fuehrer's order. The conference was fixed—by Hitler—for August 30. Ribbentrop was to represent Hitler, Ciano to act for Mussolini.

On the eve of the conference a communiqué was issued by the German semi-official news agencies, the Deutsches Nachrichten Bureau, and the Italian Stefani Agency, in these terms: "The Foreign Ministers of the two Axis Powers have not come to Vienna to dictate or to impose any solution. In their despatch cases they have no geographical map showing the future boundary between Hungary and Roumania." This proved to be one of Hitler's foulest and most deliberate falsehoods.

The next morning, Gigurtu and Manoilescu entered the conference room at the Belvedere Palace. Ribbentrop, at his most pompous and iciest, with the less significant Ciano by his side, confronted them. The Hungarians were already there. On the table lay a large map. Marked on it in heavy blue pencil was the new frontier line dividing the New Hungary from the old Roumania. Ribbentrop greeted the Roumanians stiffly and arrogantly, gave the signal for the delegates to be seated and began the proceedings by addressing them. His speech was brief in content and raspingly commanding in tone. It was addressed directly to the Roumanian delegates and consisted of thirty words: "Gentlemen, by order of the Fuehrer, we offer you two alternatives, either you will accept this boundary without any objection, or German troops will march, with the Hungarian army, into Roumania."

Ribbentrop glanced coldly round the room and sat down. For a few seconds there was silence. Then, on the other side of the table, almost opposite Ribbentrop, there was a crash. Manoilescu had fallen from his chair in a fainting condition. He was removed to an adjoining room where a doctor was summoned. Gigurtu, pale and obviously shaken, rose and nervously asked if he might have per-

mission to telephone to Bucharest for instructions. He was too bewildered even to express a word of surprise at the suddenness and unexpectedness of the ultimatum. He was too terrified to say a word about its brutality or the deceit that had brought him and his colleague to take part in an arbitration and have given them, instead, a virtual declaration of war. Ribbentrop curtly nodded assent to Gigurtu's request and left the room.

The same evening, Gigurtu and Manoilescu left Vienna for Bucharest. Manoilescu was in a state of collapse and had to be accompanied by a German doctor. During the journey the formerly jaunty Foreign Minister had a number of heart attacks and at times it was thought he would not survive the shock he had sustained in the Belvedere Palace. But he recovered sufficiently to address the Roumanian nation on the evening of August 31.

A Special Crown Council was hastily summoned when the Ministers reached Bucharest. The ultimatum was considered. There was a division of opinion. The members closer to the King were for rejection and taking the consequences of a conflict. These views were offered, however, with hesitancy. The friends of the Iron Guard leader, Horia Sima, offered positive advice—there was no other course than acceptance of the new frontier; resistance to a German-Hungarian threat of invasion must be impossible and futile. They strengthened their counsel by alleging that, as in the case of Poland, Russia would seize the opportunity of extending her sway over Roumanian territory. A German march into Transylvania—and probably farther—would be followed, most likely, by a Russian march to the Carpathians and the occupation of all Moldavia. Simultaneously, the Bulgarians would be certain to invade and occupy the Dobrudja. These arguments were supported by the Roumanian General Staff which recommended immediate and unconditional acceptance.

The Diktat of Vienna was accepted.

On the evening of August 31, the Foreign Minister, Mihail Manoilescu, disciple of Fascism and friend of Mussolini, broadcast a message to the Roumanian nation on the tragedy that had befallen them at Vienna. Painfully and almost in tears, he told the story of the great deception; how the Prime Minister and he, as loyal collaborators in the new scheme of things in Europe, had gone to the Nazi Fuehrer hoping for his good offices in the crisis that threatened Roumania through the demands of Hungary; how the Fuehrer had promised to give his aid to prevent the disruption of their country; how confident they were that the Fuehrer would abide by his promises; how, in pursuance of these promises, they had gone to Vienna at his request, in good faith and with a policy of conciliation, to discuss and arbitrate on the issues between Roumania and Hungary; how, at the Belvedere Palace, conditions enforced by threats were so different from Hitler's promises at

Munich; how the presentation of Hungary's demands was made in a way that left no room or opportunity for discussion; how there was no alternative but to yield to the threat of force.

The major part of Transylvania, 17,600 square miles, was wrenched from Roumania; with it went 2,000,000 Roumanian subjects of King Carol. Bessarabia was already gone. The Dobrudja was soon to follow. After a little more than twenty years, the proud state of Greater Roumania was in ruins. The surrender to Hitler was complete. A grief-stricken, embittered, enraged nation rose in anger and dismay. The Iron Guardists, the National Peasants, the Liberals and all the enemies of Carol cried for vengeance against the betrayers of Roumania. Gone and forgotten was the "Renaissance King" of two months before. In his stead, the nation only saw and reviled the monarch who had, once again, broken his oath to defend the national honour, the territory and the sovereign independence of his people. The days of Carol the Second as King of Roumania had come to an end.

CHAPTER XVIII

REPORT ON SURRENDER

WHAT ACTUALLY OCCURRED among the people, the army and the politicians of Roumania before and after the butchering and betrayal of their state, at Vienna, is best told in the words of a Roumanian eye-witness from Transylvania. His authenticated report is here published for the first time.

"Roumania was not prepared for territorial concessions. Everyone had made material sacrifices for the organisation and equipment of the army and for fortifications. Old men as well as the young were called up for a year's special service.

"At the New Year, the King visited the West, East and Southern frontiers and declared that we shall defend them. The whole nation was convinced that, although we were surrounded by enemies who would all attack us, probably at the same time, we should not yield except after a struggle. The nation was prepared spiritually for such a fight. The Government appeared to have the same view.

"At a Crown Council held in February, 1940, the report of Gafencu (the Foreign Minister) was that even the Bulgarians who were not threatening but were waiting for a peaceful solution of their claims—'must not, by our attitude, be induced to believe that they can nourish too many illusions'. With regard to the Russians, we had to deny the rumour that we intended to

abandon Bessarabia without a fight. About Transylvania there could be no question at all.

"Thus, from the highest to the lowest, all were convinced that the frontiers would not be changed and that any attempt to do so would be met by war.

"The Russian Ultimatum came at the moment when the country was in this mood. I was told that the Russian demands fell like a thunderbolt upon everyone and created general confusion. At the Royal Palace the King did not know what to do. The Government was divided. The army was equally confused.

"The Germans pressed for non-resistance to the Russian Ultimatum. They gave us the impression that, in the future (with regard to the Hungarians) they would be favourable to us. Russia refused any discussion, while the Communists of Bessarabia, though few, began to move. The civilian population, especially from Cernauti, took flight. The panic became indescribable. There was no question of Anglo-French support; France was defeated and England was too far away.

"The army retreated in terrible disorder. There were reports about colonels who deserted their regiments and fled on horseback to the Pruth. The rank and file were much more disciplined and, under the command of junior officers, arrived, as best they could, in Moldavia. The cowardice of certain senior officers was observed. I talked to many friends mobilised in Bessarabia and the Bukovina and all complained of the weakness of the senior officers.

"Everyone talked about the panic at the Palace. The same people who, only a few months before, could see in the King, with all his faults, a soldier ready to die rather than yield, now saw him as a coward and his generals as a lot of puppets raised to a rank they did not deserve. At the same time, the King began to discuss the situation through the intermediary of Urdareanu. Even the members of the Government had first to report to Urdareanu.

"The people mourned for Bessarabia but were convinced that now there was peace in the East (so it was thought, then) we should fight against anyone making new territorial claims against us.

"The Party of the Nation, the Iron Guardists, recently prisoners and now members of the Government only emphasised the indecision of the Palace. Gigurtu's Government was never taken seriously.

"This was the general atmosphere when negotiations with Hungary and Bulgaria were started. Only then did people realise that instead of fighting we 'negotiate'.

"This was the situation during the last days of August. I heard all kinds of ugly things about the King. It was said that, although

the negotiations with the Bulgarians had not yet begun, he had already sold the Balcic Castle to the Bucharest City Council in order to avoid a personal loss through the cession of the Cadrilater. This was the general talk in the whole city and everyone was indignant that the King, instead of thinking of the defence of the country, was preoccupied by his personal and material affairs.

"M. Vaida said it was quite possible that everything I said (about a British victory) was true but held that the destruction of Germany would mean the Bolshevisation of Europe. He believed that the belligerents would arrive at a compromise, but if there were to be a victor, it would be Germany.

"M. Maniu insisted on the necessity of finding at least an understanding with Russia. He does not believe in a German victory.

"The greatest difficulty lay in the fact that all were so confounded by the rapid German victory in France and in the general belief that in September the invasion of Britain would take place. They believed that the German 'blockade' of Britain would cause a total scarcity of food there, that the air bombardment (which was just beginning) would create panic, that the workers wanted peace and finally they believed everything German propaganda gave out. I was astonished that even serious-minded young men were taken in by this propaganda.

"Before the negotiations with Hungary, preceding the Vienna Award, Gigurtu and Manoilescu summoned many of the leaders from Ardeal (Transylvania). Nothing was said to them about territorial concessions. Manoilescu said, in private, 'possibly there may be small rectifications. What can we do now, since we were not with the Axis from the beginning?' Then followed the Vienna Award. Nobody could believe it.

"At Cluj, where no one expected such a thing, people came out into the streets, demonstrating for two days continuously, demanding resistance. Then, dismayed, hundreds of weeping men knelt for hours on end in front of the Orthodox Cathedral not knowing what else to do. Among them were officers, University professors and school children. All were in tears. At the Town Hall, the picture of the King was torn down and replaced by pictures of Horia Sima, Avram Iancu and Juliu Maniu, draped in tri-colour.

"The evacuation of Ardeal was carried out in order, but with the people in tears. In the Roumanian villages (and from Oradea to Cluj, on the main road, there are only Roumanian villages) the peasants came out on to the roads begging the retreating army not to abandon them again to Hungarian slavery. Many soldiers refused to abandon the fortifications which they had been guarding for a whole year.

"At Bucharest, Crown Councils were held even before the

evacuations took place. The way these Councils were constituted is further proof of the lack of judgment of the Government and the Royal Palace (the King and his advisers). The younger brother of Codreanu who is not even normal was invited as well, in order to create the impression that the Iron Guard is in agreement. Naturally, Maniu, who at last, had the opportunity openly to tell the King everything he had to tell him, was also invited. In his discussions with the King, Maniu told him he was directly responsible for the situation, because, instead of consulting the country, he had governed only with persons exclusively devoted to him. Briefly, he said that neither the King nor even the Crown Council had the right to decide about cession of territory because Roumania was not a limited company which a Board of Directors could dispose of. He declared precisely that the new Constitution providing that the King directed foreign policy made him responsible for the manner in which it had been conducted.

"Then the vote was taken on the question of cession. Cession without resistance was voted at 4 a.m. Cuza declared that although all his life he had been on the side of Germany, he had to vote against cession. So voted Mihalache, Mihai Popovici, Dr. Angelescu and others.

"It was natural that a communiqué should be issued showing that the generals had convinced the King that we were not sufficiently armed and that the King was forced to yield. But the communiqué came too late because everyone already considered the King as a coward. Everyone was talking loudly in the streets against him. All round the Palace where houses had been demolished in order to construct a large Piazza, crowds were protesting against money being spent in that way instead of on the army. The public slogan about the Piazza was to call it 'The King Carol II Desert'.

"Then the Iron Guard came into the open in the streets. They seemed to be the only organised political force. I can say 'perfectly organised'. Horia Sima issued a manifesto which declared 'The King must go'. One evening a parody of a revolution was staged in Bucharest. There was an attack on the Radio Station and a few other trifles. With a few revolver shots the thing could have been dealt with easily, had the King still had a little energy. Only at Constanza were things serious, resulting in casualties, with dead and wounded.

"While, hero-like, the Hungarians were marching into Roumanian Ardeal, the Iron Guard in Bucharest were dancing in the streets with happiness at the news that General Antonescu had been taken out of prison and was called to power.

"The General at first wanted to form a kind of All-Party Government, but nobody would offer his services to collaborate with him. Maniu and many others asked for the departure of

the King. For two days the General searched for Horia Sima in order to discuss the matter with him, but he had disappeared. He reappeared only when he was sure that the General was prepared to accept all his conditions, including that of the Legionary (Iron Guard) State. I must mention that, since his return from Germany, Sima also asked the King to form the Legionary State. Thus it was that the Legionary State came to be formed.

"The Vienna Award opened the eyes of all Roumanians, even those who were great admirers of Germany. Since then everyone curses the Germans.

"The Germans themselves realised the effect and, through hundreds of agents everywhere and in every sphere of activity, organised demonstrations to show that it was not Germany that was the author of the injustice of Vienna, but Italy; that Hitler was furious and that Germany would do everything in her power to reconstruct the Roumanian State. But, in general, this propaganda failed.

"The Roumanian people hate the Germans. Roumanian army officers turn their heads when they meet Germans. At Galati a Roumanian soldier threw a bottle of soda-water at the head of a German. In a Bucharest restaurant an officer slapped a German. The Germans are blamed for everything. There is no meat because the Germans eat it all. The price of salt is high because the Germans take it away.

"Many intelligent people keep on saying that we could do nothing else and that, at least, when the German breakdown comes, we shall be able to fall on them from behind. They hold that, if we had resisted, the Russians would have fallen on us and then it would have been worse, that no other country was in a worse situation because we are surrounded on all sides by enemies and without support from any quarter.

"Roumanians cannot understand why they should be considered worse than the Hungarians who, after all, during the past 22 years have been shouting that they are with the Axis. Roumanians say, 'the Hungarians give all they produce to the Germans, so why are we more guilty than they? Besides, the Hungarians are not threatened by the Russians, as we are'.

"It is a fact that the whole country listens to Radio London as they would listen to the Gospel. Every evening they listen hopefully trying to catch a word of encouragement from the English. Every evening crowds of people are gathered round the better radio sets and give up all evening entertainment to be at home to listen to the British broadcasts.

"The officers behave in the same way. Recently, I was at a party with the Aide-de-Camp of a general, an important member of the present Government. He was telling me that the general

had his own radio set in his study in order that, in the evenings, he could listen to the London broadcast and that at the fall of Benghazi, they celebrated the event with champagne at the Ministry.

"Although nobody knows what Britain will do, if she is victorious, about the frontiers of Roumania, yet all pray for her victory. They say, 'come what may, we are interested only that Germany should be destroyed'.

"So, everybody whispers, looking up at the sky as if hoping to see British aeroplanes coming to bomb us. I think it is one of the strangest situations to know that they will be bombed, yet to desire this bombardment. It will be the greatest joy to the country when the oil fields begin to burn and I am convinced that at the first oil field set alight by British bombs, all others will be set on fire by Roumanian hands.

"The Iron Guard was continuously in the streets demonstrating with songs but not attacking the King. But they were spreading Horia Sima's manifesto calling for the King's abdication. At the Palace, General Antonescu was trying to induce the King to take drastic measures. And then the King gave a letter by which he leaves the Throne in Michael's charge. When this act was concluded thinking people were still divided; many were glad of it; others considered it with anxiety. The suburbs were entirely Iron Guardists. The whole mob of the slums overflowed towards the Centre carrying banners with Codreanu's picture and shouting. This lasted for several days.

"The Iron Guard knew the day of the King's departure and they arranged a 'reception' for him at Timisoara when they placed machine guns at the station. Fortunately, the station master ordered the train to pass through at full speed, but even so, it was riddled with bullets.

"After his departure the atmosphere changed completely. At first, because he had taken Mme Lupescu with him. The country thought she was a mere setting but now they realised that she was a reality. The country wanted a scapegoat.

"The house of Mme Lupescu was opened to the public and its luxury contrasted with the poverty of the unfortunates of the slums who hurried in crowds to see the exhibits. An entrance fee was charged 'For Legionary Relief'. On the tables packs of cards were stacked so as to give the impression that it was a private gambling house. Even more harm was done by posting bills in the streets with names of limited companies of which the King was a shareholder. The posters made it appear that by his connection with these companies, the King had exploited the country.

"This was done with the sole purpose of turning the people completely against the King. The talk spread that 'he was clever but a coward and dishonest'. He was called 'a crook'.

"It is a great mistake to believe that the Iron Guard is not with Germany. It was and is with Germany. Horia Sima had visited Fabricius daily. When he was interviewed on the question of Transylvania being torn away from the Motherland through Germany's verdict, he replied, 'I am not interested in geographical unity but only in the spiritual unity of the Roumanians, under the auspices of the Great Reich'. Any comment on the Iron Guard was forbidden.

"The reason for the fact that, at one time, Germany ceased to support the Iron Guard and gave her support to Antonescu can be found in 'economic questions'. They appointed special commissars for control, commissars for 'Roumanisation', who muddled things in economic life more than ever before. Then the Jewish shops were taken over through contracts signed under the threats of the revolver. Some Jews were forced to give receipts for money which was only on the paper of the contract but which they never received. This atmosphere paralysed the whole economic life and then the Germans gave their support to Antonescu who, on the occasion of his last visit to Berlin, was given a free hand.

"Immediately on his return, he changed the Prefects. The same day, the Iron Guard which was preparing a coup because they realised they were being overwhelmed, let their revolution loose. So, although not quite ready, the Iron Guard began the disturbances in order not to lose the Prefectures which, in the majority of cases, were armed."¹

CHAPTER XIX

"SIXTH SENSE" JEW-BAITER

THE KNIFE-SHARP AIR bit painfully into my face when I stepped from the Orient Express at Bucharest in the early hours of New Year's day, 1938. The gloomy station, silent save for the shufflings of the few sleepy porters and the tired hissings of the engine, gave emphasis to the frigidity, as it were, of my entry into the Roumanian Capital. It was not a heartening beginning of my mission to investigate the real meaning of King Carol's nomination of the fascist, anti-semitic Government of Octavian Goga.

I had hoped to be able to secure interviews with the leading figures in the political drama which had set the world wondering and had created consternation in Roumania. I was hopeful of being

¹ This report was received in London shortly after the events it deals with. For obvious reasons the name of the reporter cannot be disclosed during the Nazi occupation of his country.

able to discuss the situation with the King himself, with Goga, and with the most significant figure in Roumania, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, leader of the Iron Guard, fascist, terrorist, murderer and most rabidly violent of Jew-baiters. Arrangements to see King Carol and Goga were made with comparative ease; to meet Codreanu proved a much more difficult task.

I took up residence in the Athenée Palace Hotel and later in the morning after my arrival, I took stock of this most notorious caravanseraï in all Europe. It was exciting to realise that here I was in the meeting place of the Continental spies, political conspirators, adventurers, concession hunters, and financial manipulators. Here, at the crossroads, as it were, dividing Europe from Asia, in the centre of the Balkan cockpit, were hatched most of the plots and devilments that, in days gone by, upset a government here, fomented a revolution there and, on occasion, planned an assassination. This was, in actuality, the "international hostelry" dear to the reader of William le Queux and Phillips Oppenheim. The Athenée Palace looked exactly like that, with its heavily ornate furnishings, marble and gold pillars, great glittering chandeliers and the deep settees placed well back in recesses of the lounge as if inviting conspiracy. It was a symbolic act on the part of Carol, that, when he outlawed the Iron Guard, he "purged" at the same time, this notorious plot-hatching ground by ordering its demolition and the erection of a new Athenée Palace on the site.

I spent the best part of my first day in Bucharest making inquiries about the chances of finding and seeing Codreanu. I did not succeed in gaining any information that might lead me to him, save that he was unlikely to be in the city during the critical political situation. Some of my "sources" seemed unwilling to talk at all about the Iron Guard, others had no information to give me. Somewhat discomfited, I returned to the Athenée Palace towards the late evening. I found the lounge crowded and took a seat at a small table in a corner. At the next table three men talked, heads close together, in a conspiratorial attitude, as it seemed to me. It was difficult to avoid overhearing their conversation, but as the language was Roumanian, it conveyed nothing to me. I was struck, however, by the repetition of the word "Capitanul" which, I had been told, was the title always used for Codreanu by the more prominent members of the Iron Guard. I summoned one of the hotel managers, and from the door of the lounge, indicated the group, inquiring if he were acquainted with the men. He recognised one as a well-known Roumanian painter whose address I discovered easily.

Next morning, my taxi drew up before a dingy building in a narrow, unattractive street in one of the suburbs. I found the entrance to the painter's residence to be a dark passage between two small shops. Three flights of rickety wooden stairs brought me to the door on which his name was painted. I knocked and was bidden

to enter. The artist was standing, brush in hand, before an easel perched perilously amid a wild disarray of painter's debris, in the best tradition of the Quartier Latin. He scrutinised my card narrowly and asked, in French, "what can I do for you?" I said I was anxious to see "Le Capitaine" and asked if he would take me to him. He seemed taken aback at my abrupt request but replied, quietly and politely: "You must be making a mistake. I do not know the gentleman. I am, as you see, an artist. I know nothing of Monsieur Codreanu. I regret I cannot help you." I explained, at length, the purpose of my mission to Roumania and that it was important for M. Codreanu that I should have the opportunity of conveying to the British public, perhaps to the rest of the world, the ideas and views of so important a figure in Roumanian affairs, a man whose fame had spread throughout Europe and beyond.

The artist was clearly impressed, as I talked, and, when I concluded my speech, he smiled amicably and said: "I am very unimportant. But I shall inquire if anything can be arranged. I cannot give you much hope of meeting 'Le Capitaine' because he is not in Bucharest and things are very difficult just now, as you know. But I shall try and will let you know as soon as I can."

When I entered the Athenée Palace Hotel, at noon, the next day, the hall porter told me: "A lady came for you this morning and left a message that you will be called for at eight o'clock this evening. She did not leave a note of her name, though I asked her. She told me just to tell you and left. She was an elderly woman. I have never seen her before." The mysterious visitor and her cryptic message puzzled me and I awaited the evening "call" with considerable speculation and a little trepidation. I had the impression that the message related to Codreanu and, while I was elated at the success of my detective work, I could not restrain, altogether, a sense of anxiety that I might be involved in a dangerous enterprise.

I was well aware of the terrorist record of the Iron Guard, of its long career of murder and violence, of the bestial ferocity of its hatred of the Jews manifested, over many years, by murder, attack and pillage, with all the time-honoured blood lust of the Jew-baiters throughout the many dismal eras of the persecution of the Jews. I could not believe that the Iron Guard was unaware of my Jewish birth and associations. My Jewish origin was well known in journalistic circles and in many political quarters, at home and abroad. I had made, on many occasions, too, heavy attacks in the British press against the European-Fascist anti-semites and had exposed to the British public their cruelties and bestialities long before these spread to the wider field of European aggression. There could be no doubt, in my mind, that the Iron Guard had learned something of me, in that connection, at least. Moreover, since I had been in Bucharest, I had sought contact with members

of the Jewish community, though in doing so I had been obliged to exercise considerable circumspection, for their sake.

I had learned a good deal, also, of the widespread character and remarkable efficiency of Codreanu's own espionage system. I had good reason to know this, later. Even at this early stage of my stay in Bucharest, I already had many accounts, from my journalistic colleagues, from politicians and diplomats, of the ramifications, the ingenuities and the devilries of the Iron Guard secret service which, I was told, was superior to that of the state itself—and that was saying much. That terrorist spy system must have learned something, I imagined, of my connections at home and my associations in Bucharest.

My Jewish friends, in particular, expressed horror at my intention to seek an interview with Codreanu. It was sheer lunacy, they thought, for me to venture on so foolhardy a project. They reminded me more than once that every initiate into membership of the Iron Guard was obliged to take a solemn oath which he swore on the Holy Bible and by the sacred name of the Archangel Michael, the patron saint of the Iron Guard, declaring that, "I shall never, as long as I live, either meet, talk to or have any association whatsoever with a Jew." This reminder gave me some unpleasant hesitations while I awaited the "call".

On the stroke of eight that evening, the telephone in my bedroom rang. The porter announced that, "two gentlemen are waiting for you in the hall. They say they have come for you in connection with the message left for you this morning". I asked him for a description of the visitors and he said they wore uniform. "Are they soldiers?" I inquired. "No, they are not army men, I am sure of that", was the reply. There was nothing else to do but to look for myself. I went downstairs.

The hall was crowded with the habitual motley throng that gave the Athenée Palace the appearance of an international market place. As a rule that crowd was animated and noisy but, now, I found a curious hush about it. I saw the reason, quickly. In the centre of the throng but somewhat apart from it, stood two tall, stern-faced men, formidable and grim, in semi-military uniform of green tunic, with Sam Browne belt, and dark trousers. My eye took in a conspicuous bulge at each right hip,—a revolver holster. I approached my visitors, obviously men of Codreanu's Iron Guard. Within a foot or two of them, I announced my name and inquired if they wanted to see me. Instantly, two arms shot out, like piston rods, in the Fascist salute. Somewhat embarrassed by the gesture which I knew so well and liked so little, I inclined my head awkwardly, in reply. The taller man, staring at me intently, bent down and in a low, solemn voice said, in French: "We have come to take you to 'Le Capitaine'." Not without difficulty I affected an appearance of nonchalance and inquired, innocently: "Where is M. Codreanu?"

"Our instructions are to take you to him," was the reply, spoken with deliberation.

"But I should like to know where I am to see him. Can't you tell me?" I answered, imitating, as best I could, his deliberate manner, but feeling not nearly so self-possessed as I appeared.

"We shall accompany you to the Centrale. Are you ready?" the Iron Guardist replied, precisely.

I decided to parry and asked if my callers would wait until I went upstairs. I was again given the Fascist salute as I turned away. The crowd around us watched curiously the little drama in the hall.

Upstairs, I telephoned one of my close friends, a noted journalist resident in Bucharest. I told him of my visitors and of their mission to take me to "Le Capitaine". My friend was aghast. "You are mad," he said vehemently, "completely crazy. Don't go, I beg you not to do it. You are playing with fire. Don't you realise you may not come back alive?" I summoned a slight, though, I fear, forced laugh. "What the devil are you laughing at," my friend retorted fiercely. "Don't you know these men are murderers? Don't you know that Codreanu has shot men with his own hand? Do you think they don't know all about you? If they didn't, before you came here, his spies have found out now all there is to know about you since you have been in town. They are bound to know you are a Jew and you ought to know what that means to them. Don't do it. You are playing with fire!"

I professed to be indifferent and suggested that Roumania had "got him". I added that the Iron Guard would not dare to cause any harm to a British journalist and that, in any case, I could hardly extricate myself from the situation. I felt obliged to go.

"Well, all right," said my friend solemnly. "It's your own funeral. I've warned you. But look here, I'll tell what I shall do. Telephone me when you return—if you do. I shall give you three hours. If I don't hear from you by that time I shall immediately inform the police, the Minister of the Interior and the British Minister." I was not comforted or comfortable.

I went downstairs, assuming an air of jauntiness, which I did not feel. Iron Guardists again saluted and I followed them through the swing doors into the dark square in front of the hotel. It was biting cold and the snow lay thickly on the ground. By the kerb stood a motor car to which one of my escorts pointed. I managed to see, through the gloom, that the chauffeur was also in uniform, with Sam Browne belt across his tunic. He sat stolidly, without glancing in my direction. One of my companions entered the car in front of me, I followed and the second took up the rear. I took my seat between them. The bulge at the hip of the man on the left dug uncomfortably into my side. We started.

We drove what seemed to me an interminable distance, for an

eternity of time. The motor-car wheels crunched heavily in the deep, hard snow. Not a word was spoken. A sinister gangster film came vividly and painfully to my mind. I shifted uneasily. This is it, I pondered, anxiously. I was being "taken for a ride". I had been stupid as well as foolhardy.

At long last, we pulled up with a jerk. We had stopped before a large house on the outskirts of the city. The windows were brilliantly lit and there was a sort of electrical animation about the place. "This is the Centrale," one of my companions said. "The headquarters of the Iron Guard."

Escorted on either side by my two Iron Guardists, I ascended the short flight of stairs and found myself in a large square hall, almost devoid of furnishing but busy with men, mostly young. I was bidden to wait and, after a few minutes, was ushered into a room on the right. A scene worthy of a theatrical producer confronted me. A group of about thirty men, some in uniform, others in Roumanian peasant costume, were drawn up to form three sides of a square; they stood rigid and motionless, as on parade. The room was spacious and brilliantly lit by a great, many-bulbed glass chandelier. The walls were festooned with Iron Guard banners, interspersed with a profusion of swastikas and hung with all manner of queer weapons, criss-crossed daggers, swords, knives, revolvers and rifles, photographs of men in uniform and national costume. Some of the photographs were enshrined in laurel wreaths. I learned, afterwards, that these adornments were the sanctified "relics" of the Iron Guard "martyrs". Most of the photographs were of assassins who had suffered death for their crimes; to the Iron Guard they were "comrades who had fallen in the struggle for national regeneration". On the wall opposite where I stood was a huge decorative panel running from floor to ceiling, representing a celestial, but forbidding figure bearing in the right hand a "flaming" sword. This was the Archangel Michael. On the wall to my left hung a full length portrait of "Le Capitaine" himself, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, in peasant costume. This was my first sight of the Iron Guard leader; it was a striking and impressive portrayal of a "heroic" personality.

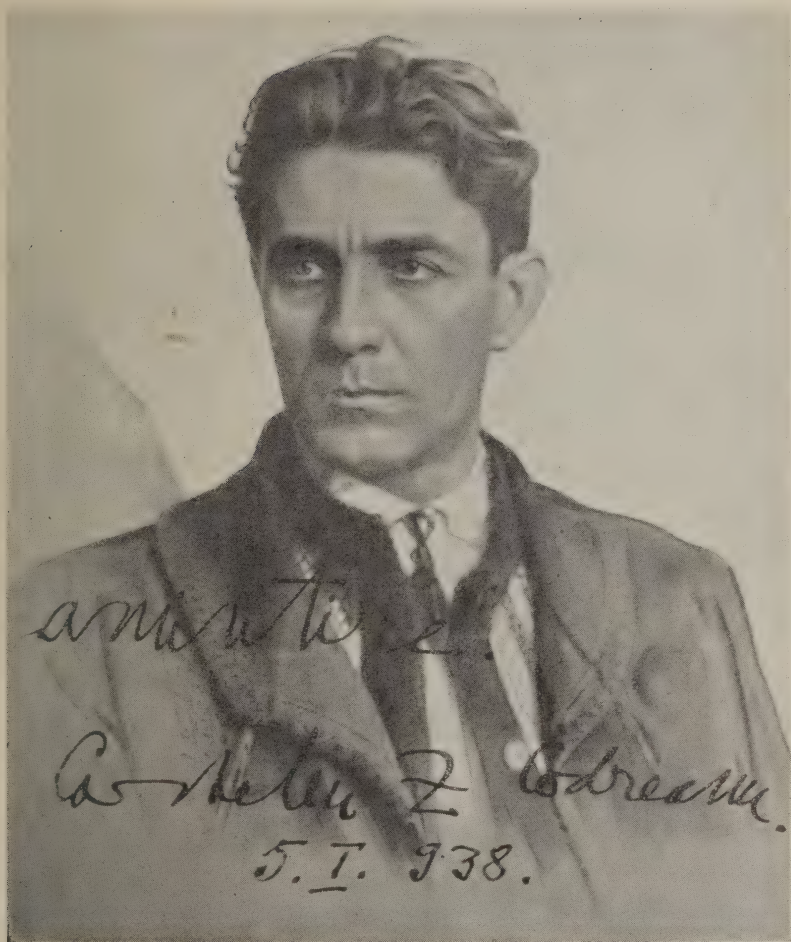
As I entered the room, one of my escorts almost shouted my name and thirty arms shot out in the Fascist salute. I made a vague inclination of the head, in acknowledgement. There was a sharp command and the three-sided square broke up. Some came forward. I was introduced and, on this occasion, received the more democratic handshake—on my initiative. An old man with a long greying beard and in regulation military uniform, engaged me in platitudinous conversation. He was General Cantacuzene, Roumanian soldier-aristocrat whose early adherence to the Iron Guard had given it prestige and a certain respectability. I could see no sign of Codreanu himself, and becoming somewhat impatient I

inquired of the general if I were to have the privilege of meeting "Le Capitaine". He assured me that I would. A little later, I repeated my inquiry, more tartly, and a member of the group which had gathered round me said, "'Le Capitaine' will be here at any moment. He is coming from the country, specially to see you. He is travelling by road and probably has been delayed by the heavy snow. He cannot be long now".

Conversation flagged until someone entered the room and whispered to a group nearby. There was a sharp word of command and, in a second, the three-sided square had re-formed, the entire assembly standing rigidly to attention and silent. I felt awkwardly conspicuous in the centre, between my two "guards". I had the uneasy sense of being "trapped".

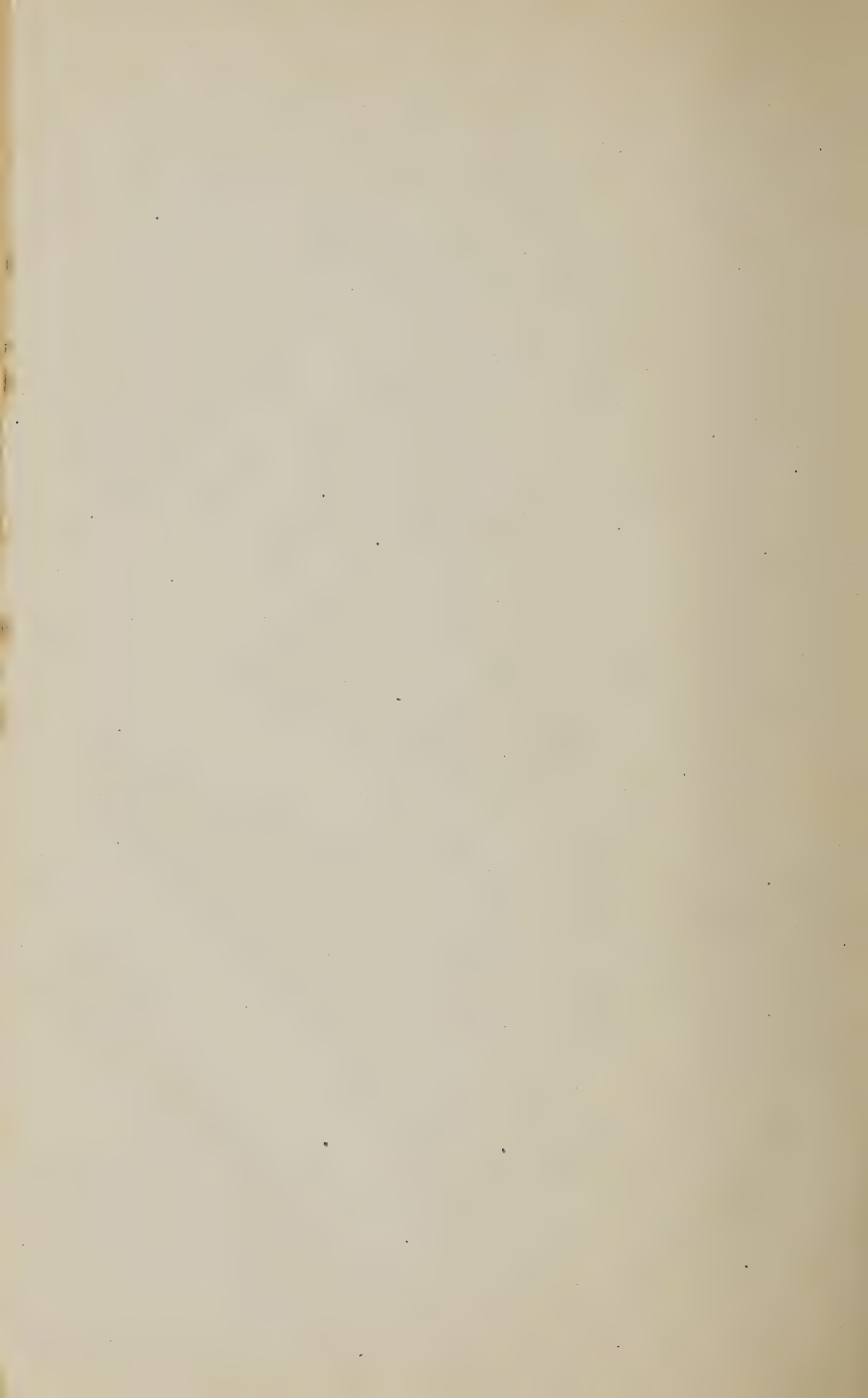
Suddenly, in a moment of almost oppressive silence, something like a storm burst into the room. Framed in the doorway stood a towering figure of flaming, vigorous youth, clad in ski-ing costume, a heavy rough sheepskin cape flung carelessly but effectively over the shoulders. The man shook the thick coating of snow from his clothing. He was bareheaded, his light brown hair tousled in boyish disarray, his bright blue, rather cruel eyes flashing above high cheekbones in a pallid, almost gaunt face blanched by the biting cold air. The giant youth stopped as the door swung closed behind him and glared round the room as everyone, except myself, greeted him with outstretched arm. That was my first view of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, leader of the terrorist, Fascist, anti-semitic Iron Guard of Roumania—a strikingly magnificent, arresting and vitally dramatic personality. His great frame suggested tremendous energy, strength and vitality; his bearing indicated authority; his manner was that of a practised actor. His "entrance" was perfect, in the best traditions of the theatre.

As I watched, deeply impressed by the vividness and magnetism of this unusually handsome man, I began to understand how Codreanu had achieved dominance over the Roumanian youth and how he had struck the imagination of the ignorant peasantry. He was an unusual type, not at all Roumanian. In fact, he was of Polish stock, evidenced by his middle Christian name. I could visualise how this imposing young giant (he was then only thirty-eight) could captivate an audience of dull peasants in the remote countryside by the magnetism of his personality reinforced by the rousing power of his inflammatory declamation of which, I was told, he was a master, and by which he could excite them to ecstasies of frenzied adoration. I learned from those who knew him intimately that he had made a close study of the style and methods of Hitler and Mussolini whom he revered. Certainly, as he stood before me, he was the dictator of one's bad dreams—arrogant, domineering and strong, with stern face, staring eyes and features set in almost frowning fixity.



"CAPITANUL" CODREANU

(The Iron Guard Leader's gift portrait to the author,
signed and inscribed "In Remembrance".)



Codreanu walked slowly round the "Guard of Honour", in the manner of royalty at the railway station. When he had concluded his inspection, he suddenly swung round dead in front of me and stared—glared—at me. With some effort I returned the stare. One of his followers whispered something to "Le Capitaine;" I heard my name mentioned. Codreanu's stern expression relaxed a little; he held out his hand which I accepted, relieved that he had not repeated the Fascist salute. As I shook hands with the Roumanian Jew-baiter, I thought of the almost comic irony of the situation—here was Jew-baiter No. 1 breaking the solemn Iron Guard oath which he himself was said to have devised: "I shall never, so long as I live, either meet, talk to or have any association whatsoever with a Jew." The notion was delicious—if nothing happened. That proviso came sharply to my mind when I heard Codreanu's voice for the first time. Looking fixedly at me, he asked in somewhat "accented" French, "What do you want, Monsieur?" His voice was hard but not unpleasant; his tone was stiff and formal and there seemed to be an undertone of suspicion in it. "I should like to have a talk with you—privately, Monsieur Codreanu," I replied, with imitative formality. "What do you want to talk to me about?" he countered severely. I explained the purpose of my mission to Roumania and concluded by saying, "You are now the most prominent political figure in Roumania". At once his facial muscles relaxed; he was flattered. I had good reason, a few days later, to appreciate his susceptibility to flattery.

Codreanu spoke a few words to an Iron Guardist who had been acting as a kind of A.D.C. There was a sharp command and in a few minutes the whole company filed out. I found myself alone with "Le Capitaine". He beckoned me to follow him into the adjoining room, which was his own sanctum. I found myself in a fairly large-sized chamber, the walls much decorated with daggers, banners, swastikas, Fascist emblems and weapons similar to those in the first room. Two large pictures of Hitler and Mussolini were conspicuous. On the wall, behind a large business table, littered untidily with papers and books, hung a huge picture of Codreanu himself staring fiercely down upon me.

Codreanu took a seat at one side of the table and bade me sit in the chair directly in front of him, at the other side. Leaning back in his armchair, he said, "Now, what do you want to know?" Having learned that he had a favourite trick, no doubt copied from his master, Hitler, of using a general question as an excuse to launch into a tirade of irrelevant demagoguery, I had taken the precaution of preparing a list of specific questions. This I handed to him, asking if he had any objection to my taking notes. He said he had no objection. I then inquired if he understood that I proposed to send for publication in London whatever he said. "I quite understand," Codreanu replied, "I have nothing to hide. I am

accustomed to speaking openly and without fear. The principles of my movement are based upon Christian honesty and truth and even my enemies know that I am an honest man."

Codreanu studied my questionnaire for a few minutes, raising his head, now and again, to glance at me sharply. At length, he leaned forward and glared at me, like a madman. He was not so much staring at as through me, with an expression I can describe only as one of suppressed frenzy which his slightly-parted lips rendered quite terrifying. I experienced an involuntary shudder of revulsion. Still, I was able to maintain a sense of reality by reminding myself that this was the familiar act of the "mesmeric dictator" and that Codreanu was mimicking the famous hypnotic "turn" of Hitler. "Le Capitaine" maintained this fantastic pose for what seemed an interminable time but was, actually, only a minute or so. I relieved the tension by "doodling" in my notebook.

I was startled out of this diversion by a bellow from Codreanu. He began to shout, at the top of his voice. He poured out a torrent of words addressed not to me, but to an invisible audience. He was not replying to my questions but indulging in an orgy of wild declamation in which there was a liberal use of the words Christianity, Love and Truth. I succeeded in detaching a few sentences here and there:

"Who says we are out for dictatorship? Who says we are bloodthirsty fanatics? We are Christians and Christians are not bloodthirsty. It is our enemies, the enemies of Christianity and Roumania, who are the spillers of blood. They seek to destroy us, but we shall destroy them first. That is our Christian duty. Are we bloodthirsty because we will not allow our enemies to annihilate us? Roumania is a Christian country and needs a dictatorship of good to do battle with a dictatorship that is evil. If we do stand for dictatorship, it will be a dictatorship of Christianity, Truth and Love."

Codreanu ranted on in this strain, then stopped as suddenly as he had begun. He emerged with a jerk from his real or affected "trance" and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. I decided to take control of the situation lest he might feel disposed again to indulge in another burst of rhetorical acrobatics. I suggested politely that he might be good enough to reply to my first question relating to the current political events in Roumania and his attitude towards them. He said he would reply to my queries "without reserve", as he had promised. To do him justice, he kept to my "book". I led him to the question of the Goga Government and his relations with the King. Of old Goga he was merely contemptuous:

"The Government professes to be Fascist, but it is Fascist only in name. It has been nominated only to mask the devilries and cunning of a man much more powerful and dangerous than the Prime Minister."

Clearly he was referring to the King and I asked Codreanu to define his attitude towards him. He replied with cautious hostility:

"We are not disloyal to the Throne but there comes a point when interference with our programme strains our loyalty. I have tried to be correct in my relations with the King, but he has no right to be against us. He has no right to oppose our ideas because he is not absolute. He ought to be an arbitrator and not a protagonist nor an opponent. He has not chosen us instead of the present government because he professes to think we are young and inexperienced. But events will prove that even the King will not be able to stand in our way."

I questioned Codreanu about his allegiance to Fascism and his relations with Hitler and Mussolini. His reply was frank and unhesitating:

"I maintain my recent declaration. When I come to power, as I shall, sooner than people think, I shall enter into an alliance, within forty-eight hours, with Germany and Italy. I am for alliance with Hitler and Mussolini because they are the leaders of countries which struggle for the defence of civilisation against Bolshevism which is satanic. I am against the democratic system. I do not believe in the League of Nations. I do not believe in an alliance with France. I do not believe in a Little Entente. I do not believe in a Balkan Entente. I say categorically that I shall discard such alliances when the decisive moment for Europe comes. People talk of dictatorship and tyranny as if they meant the same things. Take the case of Hitler. Ninety per cent of the German people voted for him enthusiastically. That does not suggest tyranny, does it? I stand for Christianity, Truth and Love which should be the only dictators."

It was when I reached the matter of the Jews that Codreanu revealed the full extent of his mania. His eyes narrowed, his brow puckered and his face grew hard. He crouched and lowered his head. He entwined his fingers and untwined them. He was working himself up again; he was becoming "possessed". He shrieked:

"The Jews, the Jews, they are our curse. They poison our state, our life, our people. They demoralise our nation. They destroy our youth. They are the arch-enemies. You talk of the

Jewish problem; you are right. The Jews are our greatest problem, the most important, the most urgent, the most pressing problem for Roumania. The Jews scheme and plot and plan to ruin our national life. We shall not allow this to happen. We, the Iron Guard, will stand in the way of such devilry. We shall destroy the Jews before they can destroy us. There are influences, important influences, on the side of the Jews. We shall destroy them, too."

He raved on in this maniac strain for minutes on end. I had difficulty in restraining my anger at this vicious, ridiculously inconsequential outpouring of a mad Jew-hater. Hitler, at his vilest, could hardly have rivalled the venomous idiocies which Codreanu spat out rather than spoke. It was a distinctly unpleasant situation for me; yet, I was obliged to hold a tight grip on my emotions. I interrupted his ranting to ask for a reasoned explanation of his statement that the Jews sought to destroy Roumanian national life.

"The Jews," he said, "permeate our whole national life. They have created a middle class which stands between the ruling and the lower classes. By preventing them from mingling, the Jews have become a peril to the Roumanians." I reminded Codreanu that thousands of Jews had lived in Roumania for centuries and had proved themselves to be good citizens. He roared back:

"The Jews can never be good Roumanians. They are a different nation. They want to dominate us, but we shall never permit that. There are three ways to deal with the Jews—assimilation, co-operation and elimination. We do not want the Jews to assimilate with us. We shall never co-operate with them. There remains elimination. That is my solution. I am for eliminating the Jews, completely, totally and without exception. If this can be done by peaceful means, it will be well. If not—well, there are other means and we shall not shrink from using them. The essential thing is that the Jews must go. Every single Jew must leave this country. You ask where they should go? That is not my business. That is a matter for the Jews themselves and for all the nations to decide. I am only concerned that Roumania should be rid of the Jews. We must insist, and we shall insist on the principle of their complete extermination from our national life."

I became wearied of all this and ostentatiously closed my notebook, indicating that I had had enough. I felt only revulsion for the lunatic in front of me and distressed at the fantastic situation in which I was obliged to appear as an impartial and unaffected chronicler.

The Iron Guard Jew-baiter rose. He was so consummate an

actor that he was able, as quickly as he assumed it, to drop his infuriated tone and manner. He smiled benignly as he stood up and offered me his hand. "Thank you for coming," he said, "I feel that you understand me. I hope we shall meet again before you leave Roumania." He paused. Then, looking at me intently, as if a good idea had struck him, he added: "Yes, let us meet again. There is so much more to talk about. Why don't you come and stay with me for a few days? I wish you would. Come and be my guest at Predeal. I shall be very happy if you will and my wife and family will be delighted. Do come. You will see how real Roumanians live. We will hunt and fish, and the ski-ing is magnificent. I promise you a happy time. The Predeal countryside is glorious and you will like my friends, they are all young. Will you come?" I pleaded unavoidable engagements. He insisted. Finally, he said, "I shall send my most trusted men to you to find out when you are ready and they will bring you to Predeal". I agreed, with a show of appreciation for the invitation.

Codreanu accompanied me to the door. Suddenly, he stopped, peered down at me and rasped out: "You know, I like you. Wait a minute. There's something I want to give you." Puzzled, I watched him walk back to his table, open a drawer (I had a vision of a revolver) and draw out a large piece of cardboard. "Give me your pen, for a moment," "Le Capitaine" said. I handed it to him. He wrote something on the cardboard, wrapped it in tissue paper and gave it to me. "I hope you like it," he said, with a smile. I undid the wrapping and found a large photograph of himself. Later, in my hotel bedroom, my journalist friend who was undisguisedly delighted that I had returned safely, told me that Codreanu had inscribed the photograph with the words, "In Remembrance. Corneliu Z. Codreanu". A Jew-baiter's gift to a Jew.

I twitted my friend about his warnings of the perils of my projected visit to Codreanu; I had just spent three hours with one of Europe's chief political desperadoes, a murderer, and all my gangster film imaginings had been dissipated. Instead of a bullet or a knife in my back, I had his gift portrait tucked under my arm. His words, "You know, I like you", rang in my ears, intermingled, in jangling disharmony, with his bellowing ferocities of hate against the Jews. The "leader" who had sworn, with all his two million subordinates, "I shall never, as long as I live, either meet, talk to or have any association whatsoever with a Jew", had invited me to be his house guest. The whole episode was utterly fantastic—and puzzling. When I told my friend of the invitation to Predeal, he was incredulous, at first. Then, he grew excited. "It's just a cunning trick," he said. "Codreanu wants to have you in his hands when the report of your published interview with him comes back from London. If there's anything in it he does not like, God help you. He'll find out all about you in the meantime. The Athenée

Palace is full of his spies. You've been lucky this time. Be satisfied and don't go near him again." I promised to take his advice. I was not anxious, really, to renew acquaintance with Codreanu.

There were some interesting incidents during the next four days. Twice a day, in the morning and evening, two of Codreanu's emissaries, in uniform, called at the hotel to enquire if I were ready to go to Predeal. Each time, I was informed "'Le Capitaine' has given us orders to accompany you to Predeal". Each time, I pleaded pressure of engagements. One morning, an Iron Guardsman asked to see me privately. In mysterious tones, he warned me that the bedroom next to mine had been taken by a "stranger", although the room had not been occupied for weeks and there were many other rooms vacant. He advised me to examine my room carefully for dictaphone wires. I found not a trace of the paraphernalia of espionage and learned that the mysterious newcomer was only a fellow journalist on the staff of a rival London newspaper who had been sent to "cover" the political crisis in Bucharest.

In the meantime, the Codreanu interview had been published in London. I had written a straightforward, objective account of what he had said, embellished with a description of "Le Capitaine" and the scene of our meeting. On the fourth day after my conversation with Codreanu, I had the now customary call from his henchmen. One had a bulky despatch case under his arm. He asked to talk to me "confidentially". I suggested "Conspiracy Hall", as I had dubbed the Athenée Palace Hotel lounge, but he said my bedroom would be more suitable. When we reached my room, he pulled from his case a bulging file of papers and asked if I had seen a copy of my published interview. His manner seemed to me to be less cordial than on his previous visits and, when I told him I had not seen the printed text, he eyed me closely. I had misgivings that the interview might have been "edited" in London. My visitor suggested I should obtain my original manuscript, which I did.

The Iron Guardist extracted from his file a number of cardboard sheets on which were pasted strips of printed matter which he put before me. They were "clippings" of the interview with Codreanu. The strips were heavily underlined in red and black ink. Opposite the marked sections were voluminous notes. "Is this the same as your original message to London?" I was asked. I scanned the pasted copy. Except for some minor deletions, the printed interview was literally correct and I said so. My visitor thereupon took me, meticulously, through the whole text, section by section, asking for and making elaborate notes of my explanations. At the end of the cross-examination, I enquired, careful not to betray my anxiety, if anything were wrong. "I shall report to 'Le Capitaine'," was the reply, with an air of finality. I deemed it wise not to press the matter.

As the man put the documents together again, my eye lighted on a sheet of notepaper which had become separated from the

rest. At the top of the sheet, I noticed the words, printed in Old English lettering, "Daily H. . . .". It looked suspiciously like a sheet of my own office notepaper and, quite deliberately, I put my finger on the paper and drew it from the file. It was not only a sheet of my own notepaper; it was jotted over with notes in my own handwriting. On examination, I found other notes in Roumanian, but I was able to read my full name and private address in London. I remembered having made notes on this particular piece of paper, a few days before. How had it found its way into the Iron Guard Headquarters' file? It was perfectly simple—it had been stolen from my bedroom. I resolved that it was my turn to be cross-examiner and, affecting an air of severity, I enquired, with frigid deliberation, how the piece of paper came to be in this Iron Guard file.

My visitor stammered uncomfortably that he could not understand it. But when I said the paper had been stolen, obviously, from my room by an Iron Guard spy, that I regarded the matter as "very serious indeed", that I should have to take "very strong measures", he told, hesitatingly, a cock-and-bull story of how a complete stranger had called one day at the Centrale, and left an envelope which, he said, he had found somewhere; then he vanished. When the envelope had been opened, lo and behold, there was the sheet of paper. He expressed sorrow, even pain, at my suggestion that the Iron Guard employed spies. I insisted that I was most dissatisfied with his explanation and, with stiff formality, I indicated coldly that the meeting was at an end.

I had not the least intention of probing the matter further. It was enough for me that the Iron Guard had, in fact, been "looking into" my history. Moreover, I realised, with little relish, that Codreanu's spies had ransacked my papers in which there was plenty of evidence that I ought not to be *persona grata* with the Legionaries of the Roumanian Fascist, terrorist, anti-semitic Iron Guard. I felt that Codreanu would, in the light of what had been discovered, revise his "I like you" impression of me. The invitation to Predeal became less attractive than ever.

Two days passed during which my interview with King Carol had been published and created something of a sensation in Roumania and abroad. Bucharest hummed with talk of it and a number of Bucharest newspapers carried biographical notes on myself. As I had heard nothing from Codreanu or his henchmen since my "cross-examination", I thought that, in view of the published conversation with the King and my own discovery of the Iron Guard scrutiny of my papers, I had shaken off, finally, the unpleasant incubus of Codreanu's "friendship". I was relieved that the cessation of his interest in me was probably due to the fact that he had discovered, at last, the "impurity" of my Jewish origin. I was mistaken.

On the second morning after the publication of the Carol interview, I had another "call" from my old friends, the two Iron Guardists who had visited me, originally. They greeted me cordially. "'Le Capitaine' has returned unexpectedly to Bucharest," I was told. "He has commanded us to say that he is anxious to see you again and will be happy if you will visit him. If you will kindly come now, we shall be glad if you will accept our escort." I enquired if Codreanu was at his headquarters. "No, he is at the Green House. We will take you there," was the reply.

The Green House! That was unpleasant. I had heard hair-raising and gruesome tales of this place. Modelled on the notorious Munich Brown House of Hitler's Nazi Germany, it was the holy-of-holies of the Iron Guard, held in sacred reverence by Codreanu's Legionaries and in awe by his opponents. Few people in Bucharest had ventured near the Green House; no Jew had ever gone within miles of it. I had been told of murders committed within its walls, of men who had been lured to it and disappeared, of torture chambers and dungeons and all the sinister paraphernalia of a barbaric secret organisation.

How was I to extricate myself from so embarrassing a prospect? I had not the excuse of being unable to take a long journey as I should have had to in the case of Predeal. There seemed no way out other than a blank refusal but, somehow, I felt unable to give it. It may have been the sheer unexpectedness, as well as the awkwardness of the situation which impelled me, against my better judgment, to say, "Very well, I shall come".

I telephoned the King's Lord Great Chamberlain at the Royal Palace across the way and informed him that I proposed to go to the Green House and asked him to "keep an eye on me". He promised readily to do so. I telephoned my journalist friend. He opined that I was "completely mad". I agreed with him.

Once more, I was seated between two Iron Guardists in a motor car, though, this time, I felt better; it was daylight and I could see where I was going. I judged we had travelled about six miles and were well out of Bucharest when we stopped and I was asked to alight. "That," said one of my escorts, pointing to a house about one hundred yards away, "is the Green House." I saw an oddly-shaped, medium-sized villa, painted green, standing quite close to the roadside, in a small garden. Its two stories were built squat and square, but at one corner an ugly conical tower stood up incongruously high and entirely disproportionate to the main structure and out of harmony with it.

As we approached I observed a great deal of activity in the grounds, much coming and going of young men in the now familiar green uniform. Two youths were doing "sentry go" in military style in front of the house. They stopped at the pretentious front entrance, barring our advance. There was an interchange of whispered

conversation between them and my escort and, drawing aside, the sentries saluted and motioned to me to pass. In a few seconds I was inside the Green House.

I looked round curiously and not a little apprehensively. Furtively, I ran my eye over the walls and floor for signs of trap doors or torture chamber amenities. I saw a large, stone-flagged, square hall. The walls, of rough stone, were completely bare, but one was covered by an enormous ornate plaque, running from floor to ceiling. It bore, in gold and colours of many hues, a greater than life-size representation of a stern-looking, forbidding, winged figure brandishing a naked sword and draped in a green and white banner emblazoned with a great cross. This was our old friend, the Archangel Michael. A narrow stairway to the right led, I soon learned, to "Le Capitaine's" quarters. A third door led to the garden.

I was kept waiting sufficiently long to make me feel uncomfortable and I was relieved, in a sense, when two officers came down the narrow stairway. "Le Capitaine" would receive me very soon, they told me, but, in the meantime, would I like to see round the house and grounds? "We have some very interesting things to show you," one said. I followed the two officers through an iron door which one of them unlocked and found myself in the grounds at the back of the Green House. There had been some attempt to make something of a garden here, but without much success. The grass plots, the paths and the plants were ragged and untidy, but the winter weather may have been partly responsible for the bleakness of the place.

Realising, apparently, that I was not impressed, one of my companions said, "This is holy ground for us. It has been sanctified by the devotion of 'Le Capitaine' and by the bodies of our martyrs". I did not understand what he meant and told him so. He added, "Come, I will show you". I was conducted to what appeared to be a tomb, a square construction of wood, ornately carved, and sunk into the earth. It was surmounted by an oriental dome or cupola that had once been gilded but was now blackened as if by burning. Lying athwart the dome was a large cross, broken at the base. Once it had been golden, but now it was charred and black. The whole thing looked like a small underground chapel; a few steps led down to a door and on the ground, surrounding it, were little pots of flowers and religious emblems.

Both my companions stopped sharply, stiffened as if on parade, reverently made the sign of the cross, and saluted, fascist fashion. "Here," said one, solemnly, "lie two of the noblest martyrs of the Iron Guard. They died in battle in Spain. They fell by the side of our Spanish comrades in the struggle against the Communists. We brought them home. This is their burial place. Their tomb is consecrated and this is our holiest soil. Their shrine is sacred to us all."

I drew attention to the charred appearance of the dome and cross above it. "Our cause is divinely protected" was the answer. "A miracle happened here a year ago. There was a great tempest and lightning struck the tomb. The dome was burned and the cross caught fire and fell. But the fire quickly burned out and the dome and cross remained intact, as you see. The tomb itself was unharmed. We shall not repair the damage, so that future generations may witness the holy miracle of our divine protection."

I was led, next, to a mound of earth, like the outside of a war-time dug-out, before which my companions again saluted. They bade me follow as they descended about six feet into the ground; we stooped low to enter a rudely constructed, low doorway. I found myself in an underground chamber bare of furnishing except for a camp bed, a small table and a chair. On one wall hung the inevitable picture of the Archangel Michael and on the other a portrait of Codreanu framed in a wreath of laurel. The floor was the bare earth, with no covering at all. "This is the holiest sanctuary of the Iron Guard," it was explained to me. "It is the rarest privilege for strangers to be permitted to enter it. Few people, even of the Iron Guard, have set foot in it. This is the precise place where our 'Capitaine' lived alone for six months through the icy cold of winter. On that simple bed 'Le Capitaine' slept. He sat on that chair and worked at that very table. Here, beneath the ground, alone, he worked hard, ate and slept little. During these six months he planned and personally directed the laying of every stone of the Green House by workmen, members of our organisation specially selected for the honour by 'Le Capitaine' himself. From this underground chamber he guided our movement, safe from the enemies who were searching for him and sought to do him harm. Here he remained until the Green House rose complete, before his eyes. It is a holy place for us. It has been sanctified by the sufferings of our leader." I think I appeared satisfactorily impressed.

As we emerged from the dug-out, an Iron Guardist approached and informed us that "Le Capitaine" was ready to receive me. We hurried back to the Green House. I was led up the narrow stairway from the hall and, on the first landing, one of my companions opened a door and said, "Here is something that will interest you". In the room were about twenty little girls in white dresses with green sashes from shoulder to waist, sitting at work in front of sewing machines. Their ages ranged from six to sixteen. As I entered the room they rose in a body and saluted fascist-wise. "These are some of our youth," I was told. "Women as well as men serve 'Le Capitaine.' All day these girls sew for our soldiers. When they grow up they will fight by their side." The sight of these pale, sickly children crouched over their machines in a stuffy work-room, was pathetic; the uniform and the salute were ludicrous.

At the head of the next flight of stairs, we stopped in an ante-room beyond which, I was told, was the chamber of "Le Capitaine". In a few minutes, a door opened and an Iron Guardist, an officer, summoned me to the "presence". As I stepped into the audience chamber, I was brought up, with a jerk, by an astonishing scene. Opposite the door, in the centre of the room, was a bed in which lay Codreanu, clad in a loose, brightly embroidered peasant jacket. Beside him lay a child—his ten years old daughter, he explained later. Surrounding the foot of the bed, stood half a dozen stalwart men in Iron Guard uniform, rigidly erect and at attention. They were Codreanu's personal bodyguard. They saluted me gravely.

Codreanu gave me a sort of wave of his right arm, half salute, half greeting. "Come along," he called out. Noting my surprised look, he added with a smile, "I am not feeling very well. My doctor says I must rest in bed for a few days". I approached and taking his outstretched hand, said I hoped it was nothing serious. "It's nothing at all," he replied, "just a cold, but you know what doctors are." He bade me sit beside him. The bodyguard, round the bed, remained standing, motionless and silent.

Codreanu and I exchanged a few commonplace pleasantries. He was glad I had not left Roumania without seeing him again; he expressed regret that I had not been able to come to Predeal; he hoped I had a good impression of Roumania. Suddenly, he broke off this amiable conversation and remained silent for a few minutes, studying me intently. Then, his expression became stern and, fixing me with his staring eyes, he said rather harshly, "Have you seen your interview with me, in your paper?" When I told him his subordinates had shown it to and discussed it with me, he asked if it were exactly as I had written it. I assured him it was, and enquired what he thought of it. Thereupon, he pulled from under his pillow the file containing the heavily annotated clippings of the printed interview which had been the subject of my cross-examination in my hotel bedroom. Codreanu scanned the papers and said, slowly, "There are some things here I do not quite understand". I waited, somewhat perturbed and wondering what was coming. "For instance, this," he continued severely, pointing to the headline and to a passage in the article, both heavily underlined in deep-red ink. "Don't you think this is intended to be ironical?"

In describing Codreanu I had written: "Codreanu is a handsome young man of 38 who would make a fortune in Hollywood." That had given a smart sub-editor the clue for a bright headline and, at the head of the article in bold type, were the words: "Roumania's Film Star Hitler Reveals His Plans." "Le Capitaine" was clearly annoyed and upset by this flippant description of Roumania's biggest political figure, the terrifying leader of, as he claimed, 2,000,000 Fascists. My description had not been intended,

of course, to be exactly reverential and I appeared, now, to be "in a spot"—and in the Green House. For a moment I was nonplussed and unable to find a suitable explanation but the inspiration that comes in a tight corner came to me then, fortunately. "Ironical?" I replied. "Quite the contrary. You must know, surely, that in England to liken a man to a film star is to pay him a higher compliment than to say he has the capacity of a Prime Minister."

Codreanu's face relaxed at once. He beamed with pleasure. "Is that so?" he said cheerfully. "Well, that's different. Now I understand. Yes, I must say, it is a splendid interview. You have done very well." As at the Centrale, flattery had brought the "super-man" to earth. He went on: "You know, I am particularly pleased you translated so accurately my views about the Jews! People abroad do not understand this problem."

All at once, he went mad. Sitting up in bed, he launched into one of his old tirades. He shouted at the top of his voice, waving his arms wildly and glaring at me like a maniac. The little girl at his side looked bewildered and frightened at her father's antics. I shifted uneasily in my chair. Codreanu wound up his outburst in this way:

"There is a great deal of the mystic in me. In the case of the Jews I have a strange but definite intuitive sense. It is quite uncanny, a kind of sixth sense. So strong is my instinct about Jews that when I enter a room, no matter how many people are present—there may be hundreds—I can feel, instinctively, if there is a Jew in the company, even though no one has given me any idea that he is there. It is the same if a Jew enters a room where there is a crowd of people. I can tell he is a Jew, the moment he appears. I just feel the presence of a Jew—and something of horror and loathing rises within me. I feel infuriated."

I confess to a feeling of nausea, even dread, when Codreanu uttered this tirade. I had no impulse to make a smart retort and I sought no inspiration for any. The situation was either dangerous or comic. Codreanu was either a craftily cruel maniac or just idiotic. I did not, that moment, seek to elucidate the mystery of whether he was indulging in a refinement of sadistic cruelty so far as I was concerned. I did decide quickly that it was time I got clear of the Green House.

I rose from my chair at Codreanu's bedside. I said I regretted I was obliged to leave in view of important appointments in Bucharest. "Le Capitaine" looked curiously at me. "It's a pity you cannot stay longer," he said, "there is so much more to talk about. Shall I see you again?" I expressed doubts and explained that I could not prolong my stay in Roumania more than another day or so. "Well," said Codreanu, "I hope you will come back again soon. I hope we shall meet again." I muttered some appro-

Domnului
ALEXANDRU EASTERMANN
"DAILY HERALD"
L O N D R A

Cu mult drag
pentru atitudinea sa de
jurnalist. Corect
Corneliu Z Codres

București 13. Ian. 1938.

*In acest volum este scrisă povestea tinereții mele, dela
19 la 34 ani, cu simțirile, credința, gândurile, faptele și
greselile ei.*

CORNELIU ZELEA-CODREANU

STRANGE TESTIMONIAL

"To Mr. Alexander Easterman . . . 'with deepest affection because of his correctness as a journalist'."

Fascist, Jew-baiter, terrorist leader Codreanu's autographed inscription on the fly-leaf of his *Pentru Legionari*, his gift to the author. This testimonial was written just after this Iron Guard murderer had shouted "I just feel the presence of a Jew—and something of horror and loathing rises within me. I feel infuriated."

priate words. We shook hands. The bodyguard saluted and I moved towards the door, hugely relieved that things were ending, apparently, so satisfactorily.

Just as I reached the door, Codreanu called out, "Oh, wait a moment. I want to give you something". My heart thumped. It thumped still more when I saw him put his hand under his pillow. Here it was, at last, my thought flashed. Codreanu the murderer, the fanatic with the mystic instinct about Jews, was going to shoot me. I was in the Green House—alone. I was done for. Hypnotically, I watched his hand move under the pillow; in a second the revolver would be out. Involuntarily, I gasped and swallowed. He drew out, not a revolver, but a book. He called for a pen and wrote something in the fly-leaf. "This is for you," said Codreanu. "It is my own book. Keep it beside you in memory of me." I accepted the book from him and thanked him with real warmth, and, as hastily as I could, took my leave. About an hour later, I was back, safely, in the Athenée Palace Hotel.

The book Codreanu gave me, as a parting gift, was *Pentru Legionari*, the Iron Guard *Mein Kampf*, of which he was the proud author. This is what "Capitanul", the Fascist, terrorist Jew-baiter of Roumania, the "mystic" whose unfailing instinct enabled him to detect a Jew the moment he entered a room and caused him to feel "something of horror and loathing", wrote in that book:

"To Alexander L. Easterman,

"With deepest affection because of his correctness

"as a journalist.

"Corneliu Z. Codreanu."

I have never been able to solve the mystery of this Jew-baiting murderer's friendly attitude towards me.

A few months later, when King Carol outlawed the Iron Guard and Codreanu was about to leave Roumania, I had a long telephone conversation with him from London. He was as cordial as ever. Before the end of the year he lay dead on the roadside, near Bucharest, riddled with bullets fired by King Carol's soldiers who killed him "while trying to escape".

CHAPTER XX

THE PRISONER ESCAPES

AFTER LEAVING ROUMANIA, ex-King Carol, Helena Lupescu and Ernest Urdareanu, with their attendants, spent a few days in Switzerland. Carol was considerably shaken by the

attempt to assassinate him, or Lupescu, at Timisoara, and the strain of his last months as King, culminating in the struggle with Antonescu, had told heavily on his health. He suffered badly, too, through the parting from his son; the worry of having left Michael to the mercy of Antonescu and the Nazis contributed considerably to his highly nervous state. Lupescu bore the ordeal, which she shared devotedly with him, much better and it was she who insisted on his breaking the journey in Switzerland to give him the opportunity to recover his health and his spirits. There was some difficulty about this, at first, because Antonescu's guarantee of a safe conduct out of Roumania (which he so generously honoured by the murder attempt at Timisoara) bore the condition that Carol was to proceed directly to Spain to which, it was arranged with the Spanish Government, he was to be admitted, in transit to Portugal where Carol thought he might take up temporary residence, prior to proceeding to London. He remained in Switzerland until September 12.

On the morning of his departure for Spain, there was an interesting announcement from Berlin. "According to a Bucharest telegram to the official German News Agency," the statement ran, "ex-King Carol will not take up his residence in Portugal but in Spain, now that the authorities have changed his transit visa to one allowing him to remain in Spain." This was the Nazi method of announcing that Hitler had decided that Carol was not to be permitted to escape with only the loss of his throne. The Fuehrer had made a mistake once before when he allowed Edouard Benes to leave Czechoslovakia and to make trouble for the Nazis in Britain and the United States. Then, there were the exiled rulers of Holland, de Gaulle's Free Frenchmen and the Poles who had already set up their governments in London and gave all the indications of organising, in Britain and America, movements which would cause him infinite trouble in his European "New Order". Hitler regretted his omission to order his Gauleiter Antonescu to detain Carol, pending his own decision on the appropriate punishment for the man who had, for so long, adopted a hostile attitude towards him and shown his preference for the democratic enemies of Nazi Germany. The announcement from Berlin "according to a telegram from Bucharest to the official German News Agency" meant that Hitler had decided to make good the omission and that he had requested the Spanish Government to detain the ex-King of Roumania, to await the Fuehrer's further orders. Carol was unaware of this when he left Switzerland.

The exiled party were at Cerbere, on the Franco-Spanish frontier, on September 14. The Spanish Government had sent a special three-coach train to meet Carol who was surprised and annoyed to find that the officials had been given instructions to

direct him to Barcelona and that the special train was there to be attached to the express to Madrid. It was explained to Carol that he and his friends would be expected not to leave their carriages during the entire journey. Carol was now restored to health and had recovered something of his old strength of will. He expressed his indignation at the change of plan and the breach of the undertaking given to him that he was to be allowed to proceed direct to Portugal. He declined resolutely to be confined to the train, emphasising that, apart from the special privileges which ought to be accorded him as ex-sovereign, he would not permit himself to be treated as if he were a refugee from a country at war with another. There was no jurisdiction on the part of the Spanish Government, he claimed, to consider him either a prisoner of war or as liable to internment. His country was not and never had been at war. He made appeals to his long friendship with Spain—the Spain of General Franco. In the end he won the argument. It was agreed that he should proceed to Barcelona and remain there until the position with regard to his further movements could be clarified. On arrival at Barcelona, the party took up residence at Sitges, the seaside resort near the city.

Carol and his party spent a few days at Sitges and he spent them actively. He bombarded the Government in Madrid with requests to give him facilities to continue his journey to Lisbon, as originally planned and as agreed with the Antonescu Government. He protested against his virtual detention. He set great store by his communications with the Spanish Government and had no doubt at all that his requests would be granted. For he had friends among El Caudillo Franco's supporters. The most important of these friends was Serrano Suner, Minister of the Interior and, later, Minister for Foreign Affairs. Carol also made discreet enquiries in London. He hoped to be able to come to Britain to take his place as head of a Roumanian movement to aid the allied cause.

His communications, particularly those regarding London, were noted by Nazi Germany whose spies kept him under close observation. The hotel and the suite occupied by him and his party, as well as his and their movements, were under strict and constant surveillance. Nothing was permitted to appear in the Spanish press or to be sent abroad with reference to Carol's sojourn in Catalonia, with the exception of the bare fact that he was at Sitges. There was a great deal of speculation and enquiry outside of Spain, however, regarding the royal exile; once again, he had become a "mystery". Interest was especially keen in Lisbon where Carol was expected and eagerly awaited and where there were many communications from him. His principal correspondent in the Portuguese capital was Ion Pangal, the Roumanian Minister and one of Carol's best friends. Ion Pangal was a valuable ally of his former King; as former Roumanian Minister in Madrid he had

made many friends and had considerable influence in Spain where he was held in high regard, particularly by Serrano Suner.

The "mystery" about Carol deepened. After his arrival at Sitges there was almost complete silence regarding him. The Lisbon press correspondents could only report that he had not arrived, as expected, and that he was "last heard of" at Barcelona. There were reports from Geneva that he, with Madame Lupescu and Urdareanu, had been "detained" somewhere in Spain, while on their way to America. The reason for the detention was given as "pressure from outside sources". That was either a shrewd guess or a discreet and guarded disclosure of authentic information. The fact was that the "outside sources", Nazi Germany, were extremely active. Berlin was pressing Spain to hold the ex-King as an enemy of the Reich and urging the Government under no circumstances to permit him to leave the country. Franco, and Suner particularly, were in an uncomfortable situation. They were unwilling, naturally, to offend their Fascist friends of Germany, but, at the same time, they could find no good grounds either in international practice or in the specific circumstances of the case to justify so drastic a measure as the detention of a former monarch of a friendly state who had left his country with the consent of its government. Moreover, Carol had not been unfriendly to the Franco faction during the Spanish civil war. Spain's traditional sense of hospitality was also an obstacle in the way of so ungracious an act as the detention of a royal refugee. The Spanish Government demurred cautiously and pointed out politely to its Nazi friends that it had already gone as far as possible in withholding from Carol the transit visa to Portugal.

Berlin was dissatisfied with the position and took steps to assuage Spanish sense of honour by providing more satisfactory grounds for action against the exile and his retinue. This was a difficult thing to do, directly, even for the Nazis, and so Hitler resorted to action with which he was more familiar and in which he was better practised—the indirect method of guile. Before long, the Bucharest press, which had become thoroughly Nazified and fully controlled by Berlin, began to launch the most vehement diatribes against the ex-King and, more particularly, against Lupescu and Urdareanu. The most violent charges of bribery, corruption and malpractice in the state were levelled against them. They were accused, in the most reckless fashion, of large-scale swindling of the national finances and of fraudulently converting to their own use monies belonging to the state. Accompanying these charges were the usual scurrilities relating to subversion of the national morale and years of plotting to "destroy the national honour". Emphasis was laid on the fact that the exiles had been guilty of criminal practices which made them liable to punishment and there were demands that they should be brought to trial. Suggestions

were made, at first tentatively but soon categorically, that they were fugitives from justice. These were followed by demands that they were subject to the normal international extradition laws and that they should be surrendered to the state against which they had offended. Spain, it was declared, should not protect common criminals. The Nazi press and radio joined in the onslaught, always, of course, quoting the accusations made by Bucharest. The aid of Germany's most loyal allies in Spain, the Falangists, was invoked and they joined in the attacks on Carol and his party with a view of forcing the Spanish Government to hand them over to Roumania and, thereby, to Hitler. The official Falangist newspaper, *Arriba*, referred openly to "the possible return of Madame Lupescu and Ernest Urdareanu to Roumania under ordinary custody".

The pressure from Germany became so insistent that, eventually, the Spanish Government felt it impossible to withhold action. Carol and his friends were invited to proceed to Madrid. They were allotted a suite of rooms in one of the principal hotels and, though provided with appropriate comfort, they were informed that their movements would be restricted to the limits of the hotel grounds. As at Sitges, the Spanish Secret Service were discreetly but obviously, as well as numerically, in evidence, while the Spanish section of Himmler's Gestapo, trying, with characteristic Teutonic clumsiness and ill-success, to look like inoffensive Spaniards, kept watch in the hotel and its precincts. Ex-King Carol and his suite were "incommunicado", under the closest surveillance, if not actually prisoners. He protested vehemently, as before, but the Spanish Government regretted they were unable to accede to his request either for more liberty of movement or for permission to continue his journey to Portugal. He was allowed only the most limited communication with friends outside but he did succeed in keeping contact with Ion Pangal in Lisbon. He was able to make appeals to Suner who had reason to be by no means unsympathetic with Carol in his predicament, as I shall show.

As the days and weeks passed, the ex-King became more restless and troublesome. The Nazi representatives in Madrid complained to the Spanish authorities that he was being permitted too many liberties and they raised objections to the facilities that were at his disposal to maintain contacts with his friends in Spain and abroad. More concerned were the Spanish Government with the direct representations from Berlin that Carol should be handed over to the Nazis as an enemy of and plotter against Germany.

Carol was informed of this ominous development by Suner himself. The Minister of the Interior, rabidly pro-Nazi though he was, felt himself under a deep obligation to the ex-King of Roumania; indeed, he owed Carol a heavy debt of gratitude and he was heretic enough to the Fascist code of honour to be anxious to repay it.

In the early days of the Spanish civil war, Suner was in hiding in Madrid, with the Republican Government authorities hard on his trail. Capture meant certain death for him. As he moved from hiding-place to hiding-place, the Republican net closed tighter and tighter round him. Every avenue of escape from Madrid was closely watched, for Suner's capture was important for the Republican cause; he was known to have been one of the most prominent instigators and the cleverest organiser of the Fascist revolt. When his seizure seemed imminent and the possibility of escape dwindled to a minimum, Suner bethought himself of the Roumanian Legation in Madrid; the Minister had been a social friend of his and knew him well. Suner succeeded in making his way to the Roumanian Legation and begged the Minister to give him asylum and to save him from capture and inevitable execution at the hands of his Republican enemies. The Roumanian Minister gave him shelter, though under a certain protest and misgiving, pointing out the complications that might ensue should the Republican Government become aware of their quarry's presence in the Legation of a foreign state.

The Republicans were not long in finding out where Suner was in hiding. They protested to the Roumanian Minister and demanded the surrender of their important and much sought after enemy. The Minister claimed the privilege of extra-territoriality but offered to obtain the instructions of his Government in Bucharest. The Spanish Government insisted on Suner's surrender and lodged protests. They maintained that the principle of extra-territoriality did not apply to the case of Suner who was a traitor, a criminal and a fugitive from justice. The problem was referred to Bucharest and was brought directly to the notice of the King who was asked to make the decision in answer to the Spanish Government's demand. General Franco, who was informed of his chief lieutenant's peril, instructed his representative in Bucharest, Senor Pratt y Soutzo, to make personal intercession with Carol begging him not to yield up Suner to the Republicans and to save his life. Carol issued personal and direct instructions to his Minister in Madrid that the fugitive was to be kept in safety in the Legation which was technically Roumanian territory.

There was no legal process whereby the Republican Government could enforce their demands; measures entailing forced entry into the Legation would have meant violation of foreign soil and might have led to a delicate and complicated situation with a foreign and friendly state. There were difficulties enough for the Republicans of Spain in those days. Suner remained in safety in the Roumanian Legation for a considerable time and, eventually, he was aided to make his escape to the Fascist lines. Carol saved his life. To do him justice, Suner was grateful and did not forget the debt when Carol himself was in trouble.

Hitler continued to urge the Franco Government to take sterner measures to curtail Carol's liberty. Carol, on the other hand, continued to insist on the removal of the restraints on his liberty and to protest against his being treated as a prisoner, without justification or legal right. Despite the constraints on him, he was able to communicate with influential Polish and American friends in Madrid. He succeeded in renewing his representations in London for facilities to enable him to take up residence there. All this caused the Spaniards much anxiety, the climax of which was reached when Carol threatened to carry out a hunger strike unless he were accorded treatment more in accordance with his status. Suner pleaded with Carol to refrain from so drastic a step and pointed out the helplessness of his Government in face of the pressure of Hitler. He expressed his own eagerness to ameliorate Carol's lot but plaintively drew the ex-King's attention to his own special difficulties and the delicacy of his own position. He referred to the growing truculence of his Falangist supporters who were then attacking Lupescu and Urdareanu through their press and through the Valladolid radio station which was regularly broadcasting the scurrilities of Bucharest and Berlin and suggesting that the malefactors should be returned to Roumania to stand trial.

The Franco Government decided to make a move, both as a gesture to Hitler and as a means of eliminating the trouble which Carol was causing; he was rapidly becoming the centre of quite a nest of intrigue and the difficulties of keeping watch on his activities were increasing. It may be, too, that Suner was becoming embarrassed by his former benefactor's presence in the capital—and Himmler's efficient espionage service had to be considered. Carol and his retinue were removed to Seville, Suner explaining that, there, it would be easier to accord the ex-King and his friends greater privileges and, in due course, greater aid than were possible under the difficulties prevailing in Madrid.

At Seville, Carol was, in fact, under less restraint though still under close guard. He desisted from importuning the Spanish Government unduly and gave the appearance of becoming a model, if unwilling, guest of Spain. Generally he gave the impression that he was content, though reluctantly, to await events.

Hitler, however, was not so quiescent. He was not satisfied that the Spanish authorities were responding adequately to his demands that Carol should be regarded, at least, as a hostage, pending his own decision for the ex-King's permanent detention on Germany's behalf. Coincident with the Fuehrer's displeasure, the Spanish Fascist press and radio grew more antagonistic towards the refugees and more violent in tone in the broadcasts concerning them. When Carol complained to Suner about this, the Minister of the Interior explained that he was obliged not to interfere with

the Falangist agitators because they were obeying the instructions of Hitler and that it would be better to appease the Fuehrer rather than arouse his further anger, with probably unpleasant results for Carol. Suner assured Carol of his help.

It was obvious that Hitler would not allow the matter of Carol's future to rest in this indecisive state. The Fuehrer was bent on preventing the possibility of Carol eluding him by escape from Spain; he was equally determined to curtail his liberties and to exact punishment for the ex-King's "crimes". The difficulty was how to exert the necessary pressure on Spain to yield up her unwelcome guest. The usual menaces against a friendly state, a Fascist collaborator almost openly hostile to the enemies of Germany and openly sympathetic with the Nazis and the "New Order", were hardly applicable and could not be invoked.

Hitler thereupon resorted to his second line of attack—subterfuge and craft. He gave instructions to Ribbentrop to advise the Spanish Government that Germany would relieve Spain of the responsibility of housing the Roumanian ex-King and of the difficulties that might arise, should Carol make an attempt, as seemed likely from his known intrigues with his friends, to extricate himself from his quasi-imprisonment. Hitler suggested that Spain should transfer Carol to Germany where the Fuehrer would place at his disposal a residence appropriate to the ex-King's station. To make the offer more palatable and attractive Hitler offered to place at Carol's disposal a castle in Germany and mentioned one formerly belonging to Carol's own family of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen. Carol would be treated, Hitler assured the Spaniards, in accordance with his status as a former monarch; his position and treatment would be similar to those accorded to King Leopold of Belgium.

The Spanish Government was in a quandary and deliberated at length on Hitler's "offer". While the deliberations were in progress, Suner informed Carol of Hitler's proposals, pointing out the difficulty the Spanish Government would have in refusing the Fuehrer's request. He added that should his government decline to accede to the suggestion, it was certain that Hitler would renew and increase his pressure and that this must reach a stage when refusal could not be prolonged. Cautiously, and in the spirit of friendship, Suner suggested that Carol should take steps to find the way out of the dilemma. The ex-King was not slow to take the hint that Suner was advising him to plan escape. He gathered also that the Spanish Government would accept with relief any "solution" that Carol could devise himself and which would not involve them in any direct responsibility. Suner offered his services and indicated how he could help in ways which could not be directly attributed to him. When Hitler's "offer" was, at last, communicated to Carol, he declined categorically to accept it. He was not disposed to fall into

Hitler's obvious trap. The proposal of a Castle in Germany ill-concealed Hitler's plan to make the ex-King a prisoner of the Nazis; the offer to be treated in the same manner as Leopold of Belgium merely confirmed the plan and Carol's suspicion of it. Carol noted, too, that neither Lupescu nor Urdareanu were included in the offer of "asylum" and he was not inclined to leave them to the tender mercies of Hitler and Antonescu, for the Spanish Government would not find, in their case, the same unwillingness to surrender them to Roumania.

Carol decided to act, when Suner told him Hitler was demanding his removal further inland—to Granada. He based his plans on two previous experiences of how to extricate oneself from a tight corner, his own and that of his uncle, King Carol I. His own experience was the manner of his return from France to Roumania in 1930. On that occasion, when he was under the closest supervision of the French Secret Service at the request of the then Roumanian Government, he left the Château of Coesmes under the pretext of taking a short motor-car ride in the country. Taking the wheel himself, he quickly outdistanced the detectives who were following him in a motor car. Having, in advance, carefully studied the countryside, he knew how, at a certain cross-roads, to take what appeared to be the most illogical turning. He eluded his pursuers successfully and reached Strasburg the same day. There he put up at a hotel, announcing that he was the valet of his own private secretary. He carried out the pretence to the extent of carrying his own luggage into the hotel. From Strasburg, the following morning, he left by motor car for Munich where he boarded an aeroplane which took him to Bucharest.

Carol also recalled that, by a coincidence, he had repeated the method used by his uncle King Carol I to enter Roumania from Germany when he was nominated as Prince of the Roumanian Principalities. The nomination was opposed by the Western Great Powers who were resolved to prevent Carol's entry into Roumania. It was known that the agents of these powers were on the watch and would stop him by physical means, if necessary. Carol adopted the device of disguising himself as the valet of Bratianu the Elder who had secured his nomination to the Roumanian throne and who was accompanying him from Germany to his new country. In this way, the Prince reached the Danube and travelled by steamer to Roumania without being detected.

Ex-King Carol the Second was also an enthusiastic admirer and follower of the Boy Scout movement and had studied its methods. He obtained permission (Suner was Minister of the Interior) to take short motor-car rides in the country round Seville on condition that he submitted to his guards, in advance, his proposed itineraries and that the men of the Spanish Secret Service should follow him by motor car. During these outings the detectives

kept a close eye on their charge and were never far behind him. Carol, the Boy Scout, thoroughly enjoyed the chase and took a delight in giving his guards plenty of excitement. Always fond of speeding, he made the practice of accelerating to full capacity, outdistancing the motor car following him and then stopping until his escort overtook him. The Secret Service men became accustomed to the eccentricities of the ex-King, began themselves to enjoy the excitements of the chase and eventually assured themselves that it was quite safe to permit their charge to indulge his boyish passion for speed and elusiveness. Carol carried out these antics so frequently that they became the recognised form which his motoring outings took; he accustomed his detectives to the company of Lupescu and Urdareanu whom he always invited to join in his run-and-chase manœuvrings. As Carol careered round the countryside with his two companions, they took careful note of the lay of the land, the turnings, crossroads and short cuts. Especially, they made note of the less frequented roads leading to the Portuguese frontier.

On the morning of March 3, 1941, Carol appeared in his most cheerful mood. Casually, he informed his Secret Service guardians, with whom he had established cordial relations, that if he could have their permission, he proposed to take a longer motor-car trip than usual and that, unless there were any objection, he planned to spend most of the day on the road. The whole party, wards and wardens, Carol suggested, might picnic together instead of eating in roadside hostelrys; this, he thought, would be more discreet and convenient for everyone, as well as more pleasant. His escorts consented to the project with alacrity, even with enthusiasm; they had come rather to like the genial ex-King and were flattered by his condescension in admitting them to his privacy and companionship. The picnic equipment and food supplies were brought down from Carol's suite, sufficient for a party of seven, Carol, his two friends and four detectives. The party set off in good spirits.

Carol, as usual, took the wheel of his motor car and led off in a south-westerly direction, the detectives following at a discreet distance. As usual, he accelerated speed after a time, raced ahead of the car behind, outdistanced it until he was out of view, stopped and awaited until his escort caught up with him. He repeated the manœuvre at intervals. The game of escape-and-catch-up proceeded merrily, as on so many previous occasions; the whole party was in exuberant mood. Carol darted into and out of side roads and by-paths and reappeared on the main highways. He had made himself, obviously, well versed in all the intricacies of the countryside.

The details of this exciting hide-and-seek by motor car were related ruefully in the report afterwards made to his official superiors by one of the Spanish Secret Service men who took part

in the merry chase of the Roumanian monarch and his companions. Carol unfolded to the detectives his plan to travel southwards from Seville to Huelva on the Gulf of Cadiz. He then proposed to turn north on the road to Merida. Somewhere between Aracena and Ficalho he would turn eastwards and return to Seville. The detectives did not attach any significance to Carol's proposed itinerary, nor to the fact that Ficalho was at the Portuguese frontier.

The picnic party made a short stop at Huelva; all were in high spirits and exhilarated by the speed and excitement of Carol's impish pranks. The ex-King, taking advantage of the detectives' good humour, engaged their further confidence by informing them that if, by chance, they should be outdistanced and have any difficulty in recovering the "scent", they would find him near Aracena where the whole party would take lunch.

Carol set out from Huelva, followed by the detectives. For a time, he maintained a reasonable speed, keeping within sight of his guards as far as the village of Valverde de Carnina. There a lucky thing occurred to give Carol an opportunity for a diversion. A long train of farm labourers' carts, proceeding leisurely along the road in the same direction as the picnic party, came between the two motor cars, cutting off the detectives' view of the ex-King and his friends. Carol promptly put his foot on the accelerator and sped quickly out of the sight of his guardians. At the point near Aracena where, by the pre-arrangement, he was to have turned east towards Seville, Carol switched, instead, westwards in the direction of the Portuguese frontier.

In less than thirty minutes he was close to the customs post at Ficalho. He parked his motor car at the side of a road at a point where a Portuguese friend was waiting and signalled Carol to stop. This friend led the ex-King and his companions across the frontier, making a detour to avoid the Spanish Customs post. The party openly presented themselves, however, at the Portuguese Customs post in order that the entry into Portugal should be proper and legal. Carol had taken the precaution of securing Polish passports, with correctly endorsed Portuguese visas, provided by Polish friends in Madrid for himself, Madame Lupescu and Urdareanu. They had no difficulty in satisfying the Portuguese frontier authorities that their papers were in order.

By the time the alarmed and disconsolate Spanish Secret Service men had traced their quarry and reached Ficalho, Carol was well within Portuguese territory. At Mevtole he was met by emissaries of Ion Pangal and, while the detectives were investigating the disappearance of the ex-King of Roumania, he was effectively out of the clutches of Hitler and already on the way to Lisbon—and safety.

Before long, the exiled King was on his way to South America. Suner had been most helpful—and paid his debt.

"FOREIGNERS WITHOUT PROTECTION"

IN ADDITION TO the political corruption, nepotism and national decay which Carol the Second inherited when he ascended the throne of Roumania, he was handed down an heirloom which has placed his country among the first of the degenerate, decadent nations which have besmirched the fair name of civilisation and human decency by consistent and deliberate hounding of a helpless minority in the unholy cause of arrogant nationalism and the false doctrines of "national purity". Long before Hitler plunged Germany into the black savagery of race hatred and debased the German mind with the squalid debauchery of his spurious and maniacal philosophies, goading the German people to wreak his frenzy upon the ancient Jewish community in his adopted country, Roumania had played a prime and ignoble part in the ceaseless tragedy of Jewish persecution in Europe. No state has been more assiduously and consistently cruel in the practice of the brutal creed of anti-Semitism than the Roumania which, by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, gained her own freedom under the solemn undertaking to preserve civic liberties and, by virtue of the Peace Treaties of 1919, was granted an extension of her territories under the solemn engagement whereby "full and complete protection of life and liberty" was guaranteed to all inhabitants of the realm "without distinction of nationality, language, race or religion". Throughout her history as a sovereign state Roumania has flagrantly abused the privilege of statehood and broken her solemnly subscribed public pledges by humiliating the hapless Jewish minority under her sway, by denying them justice and the rights of citizenship, by instigating and conniving at violence against them and, through a long series of discriminatory ordinances, by exposing her Jewish citizens to the obloquy and brutalities of savage mobs and the cruelties of political reactionaries. In all the black records of European Jew-baiting, the record of Roumania is one of the blackest; she was not merely the precursor of Nazi anti-semitism, the forerunner of Hitler's major savageries; she was its teacher and the first modern exponent of race hatred run mad. Tsarist Russia, Hungary, Poland and later, Germany, learned from Roumania the rudiments of the refined cruelty of anti-semitism as a dogma and gained experience of its more practical expression through physical violence and slaughter. The veteran Professor Alexander Cuza of Jassy, most rabid of Roumanian Jew haters and most virulent instigator of attacks upon the Jews, has boasted of the distinction of being "the father of modern anti-semitism"

and, while proud that Hitler proved the ablest exponent of his tenets, complained wrathfully that the Nazi disciple had wrested the blood-stained laurels that rightfully belonged to him, the master, as the creator of Jew-baiting as an instrument of national policy. In Roumania itself, Cuza's ablest students, the practitioners of the barbaric art of anti-semitism were the egregious Octavian Goga, the aged Naziphile poet-politician whose brief Premiership marked the beginning of King Carol's decline and fall, and the murderous Fascist reactionary, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, whose Iron Guard completed the work initiated by Goga.

In so far as Roumanian anti-semitism claimed to be based on a "principle" it was that the Jews are *straini*, foreigners, in the country of the Roumanians. The principle was as false as the motives of its enunciators were base. The history of the Jews in Roumania goes back to the dim ages of Roman times when the primitive Dacians roamed her forests. Roumanian historians themselves have asserted that Jews lived in Roumania for a considerable time before the Emperor Trajan brought hordes of Roman convicts to populate the fertile lands of its early inhabitants and conquered their country in the interests of Roman *Lebensraum*. If long and unbroken residence be a test of citizenship, many Jews of Roumania have greater claim to the privilege than some of their detractors and persecutors in that state; Codreanu himself was of Polish extraction, yet no one was more savagely hostile to the Jewish *straini* or a more brutal advocate of the "pure Roumanian nation" than he. In that respect, he emulated Hitler the Austrian with his furious zeal for the "Nordic purity" of the Germans.

The nineteen centuries of Jewish life in Roumania have been marked, as elsewhere, by alternating cycles of long periods of persecution and brief episodes of uncertain peace and uneasy tolerance. During the mediæval era, the streams of Jewish blood flowed as freely in Roumania as they did throughout the rest of Europe, in the "Dark Ages" when fanatical and ignorant mobs were incited, in the name of religion, to murder and ravage "the enemies of Christianity" and, at the behest of feudal tyrants, were provoked to wreak vengeance for economic ills upon the descendants of Israel. As elsewhere, the Jews of Roumania have had their quickly passing spells of freedom and citizenship. On infrequent occasions, a benevolent prince imbued with the rare quality of tolerance and by-passing the main road of habitual cruelty, bestowed upon the Jews the privilege of justice, but, as unexpectedly as rights were granted, so quickly were they snatched away. By the time the modern era was reached and the inchoate ingredients of a state and nation had achieved some kind of coalescence and cohesion in Roumania, Jew-baiting had become a well-established tradition of the political life of that country.

Deep-based had become the uncertain and perilous status of the Jews when Charles of Hohenzollern came, in 1866, to assume the throne as Prince of the newly-created Principality of Roumania. His subjects in his new capital greeted him with a fine spectacle—a riot against the Jews in the streets of Bucharest. When the new Constitution was submitted to the Prince it contained an Article declaring that “religion is no obstacle to citizenship” but, “with regard to the Jews, a special law will have to be framed in order to regulate their admission to naturalisation and also to civil rights”. This dangerous loophole in the constitution of a country recently accorded recognition as an independent member of the comity of nations was too much for a people conscious of newly acquired liberty. They demonstrated their sense of freedom by desecrating and demolishing the synagogue at Bucharest and by beating, maiming and robbing the Jews of the capital. This demonstration in the cause of freedom succeeded so well that the offending article was withdrawn and in its place was substituted the clause, “only such aliens as are of the Christian faith may obtain citizenship”. From that time, the patriots of the independent sovereign state of Roumania, now so politically conscious as to crystallise their dogmas into well-understood slogans, defined the status of its Jewish inhabitants as “Straini Fara Protectie”, foreigners without protection—and so it has remained as the corner stone of Roumanian anti-semitism, the distinctive feature of which (apart from its physical expression in violence) has been “the perennial refusal to accord citizenship to the Jews, although the status and treatment of the Jews by the Roumanian Government has, for three-quarters of a century, been a matter of international concern and was taken up at various international conferences”.¹ The close resemblance between the ideal behind the slogan “Straini Fara Protectie” and the fine sentiments of Hitler’s Nuremberg Racial Laws outlawing the Jews from German citizenship, will be noted.

Ion Bratianu the Elder, who brought the Kingdom of Roumania into being and whose son became the arch-enemy of Carol the Second, was a professed “Liberal” in politics. His ideas of liberalism were somewhat different, however, from those understood in Western Europe. This “liberal” leader believed in the dictatorship of the “boss-politician” and the King whom he introduced to the Roumanians was given to understand that his rôle in the state was to be decorative rather than active. The weak Prince Charles mildly acquiesced, retiring with docility to his model farming at Peris and resting content to leave state affairs to the masterful political boss, the representative of the landed gentry and reactionary elements. One of his first acts was to ransack the archives of the country for ancient legislative acts directed against the Jews and to put them into operation with merciless rigour.

¹ *The Jews in Nazi Europe*. Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York, 1941.

He drove the Jews from the rural areas and branded those in the towns as vagrants; large numbers he expelled from the country altogether. So barbarous were Bratianu's anti-semitic activities that the European powers, shocked by his wholly unwarranted cruelties, addressed a severe warning to his Government and the architect of modern Roumanian Jew-baiting was obliged to abandon his office. The seeds had been well sown, however, and in fertile ground. The Conservatives who succeeded him continued his measures until Bratianu, after a suitable interval of retirement to appease the powers, resumed office and continued his "liberalism". The Treaty of Berlin ending the Russo-Turkish War stipulated in its Article 44 that the Jews of Roumania should receive full citizenship and the unscrupulous Bratianu, accepting this internationally sponsored stipulation, promptly proceeded to render it nugatory and to evade his treaty obligations. Coincident with the reluctant naturalisation of a few hundred Jews, there was a systematic persecution of the rest, relaxed only when Bratianu's government was in need of Jewish money. No sooner was a loan obtained from Jewish bankers abroad—as a kind of blackmail—than persecution was resumed under official auspices. Jews were driven from the villages and small towns; they were debarred from various vocations except on conditions of possessing political rights which were deliberately withheld from them; they were ousted from the professions and their children excluded from the schools and universities.

Thereafter, anti-semitism in Roumania followed a continuous and steady course. Every party, every class, every age took part in the time-honoured sport of Jew hunting; it was a blood sport as well as a political pastime to hound and beat the Jews and to oust them from the life of Roumania. For three-quarters of a century, from the time of Bratianu the Elder, Hitler's forerunners carried on their work without cessation. The record of anti-Jewish legislation in Roumania throughout the nineteenth century is more sinister both in comprehensiveness and extent than that of any other country; it is the worst in the whole history of Jewish persecution; nowhere was the lot of the Jew more miserable, more tragic and more uncertain than in Roumania. In consequence, the standard of Jewish life was reduced to probably the lowest in Europe. From 1878 onwards there has been a steady flight of Jews from the terrors of Roumanian persecution; the number runs to many scores of thousands. Between 1898 and 1904 no fewer than 70,000 left the country, and it has been admitted by the Roumanians themselves that at least 70 per cent of the entire Jewish population would have fled from Roumania had they been able to scrape together the expenses necessary to take them to other lands. From 1900 to 1914 alone, about 100,000 Jews emigrated, chiefly to America.

Despite the intention of the Congress of Berlin to emancipate the Jews of Roumania, "down to the outbreak of the Great War (1914) scarcely 300 native Jews altogether were admitted to the rights of citizenship, in each case by a vote of both Chambers of Parliament, while all other Jews continued to be treated as outlaws, harassed by a multiplicity of oppressive decrees".¹ That war doubled Roumania's territories and population. The old Regat became *Roumania Mare*, Greater Roumania, through the annexation of the former Austro-Hungarian provinces of Transylvania and Bukovina and the occupation of the former Russian provinces of Bessarabia and North Bukovina. With these provinces came their Jewish inhabitants, and from 250,000 in 1912, the Jewish population of Roumania rose, in 1919, to about 850,000. The new Roumanian Jews differed basically, in social and economic character as well as in political experience, from the Jews of Old Roumania. Those of the former Hapsburg Empire enjoyed a high standard of living and culture and were largely engaged in commerce and industry; those of Bessarabia followed agricultural pursuits; those of Old Roumania had been forced into the larger urban centres and were small tradesmen, handicraft workers and of a low standard of life and culture, though they were the pioneers of many new trades such as watchmaking and bookbinding in which they became highly skilled.

The experience of the previous half century of Jewish persecution and outlawry meant that 600,000 more Jews added to the population of Greater Roumania were likely to be exposed to the tyrannies suffered by the Jews of the old Regat. To prevent this the Allied Powers forced the Roumanian Government on December 9, 1919, to sign a Minorities Treaty under which Roumania undertook to recognise as citizens all persons who resided at the end of the war in both the old and the annexed territories. So that there should be no doubt that Jews were included, Article 7 of the Treaty specified that "Roumania undertakes to recognise as Roumanian nationals *ipso facto* and without the requirements of any formality Jews inhabiting any Roumanian territory who do not possess another nationality". The Roumanian Government was reluctant to accept this curb on its traditional appetite for terrorising and persecuting Jews but was compelled by the pressure of the Great Powers to sign this pledge to govern in accordance with the elementary principles of decency and justice. The Allies, on their part, believed that they had successfully bound this reactionary Balkan State to these principles. They reckoned without Roumanian guile and political unscrupulousness.

Little more than four years later, on February 24, 1924, a new Nationality Law was passed "regarding the acquisition and loss of Roumanian citizenship" by which citizenship was made con-

¹ *The Jews in Roumania: The Nineteenth Century and After*; March, 1938.

ditional upon legal proof of continuous residence in the same place for ten years preceding December 1, 1918. This law was an open and flagrant violation of the Minorities Treaty and it was soon made abundantly clear that the intention was to initiate a new era of Jewish persecution. Few Jews were able to procure the necessary documents; those who could do so encountered the obstacle that their claim to citizenship could be challenged by a third party. The result of this law was that, within the next three years, about 30,000 Jews were estimated to have been outlawed, were rendered "stateless" and suffered all the disabilities, humiliations and hardships which this entailed.

This was not the only violation of the letter and the intention of the Minorities Treaty. The legal debasement and outlawry of the Jews coincided with a recrudescence of all the old forms of Jew baiting; in many respects they were intensified and improved. The rise of the Iron Guard, whose first principles, like those of Hitler, were the elimination of the Jews, completed the anti-semitic creed by adding physical violence to the refinement of legal disability. The governments in power, whatever their objections to the new terrorist movement led by Codreanu, did not dissent from its brutalities against the Jews; not only did the authorities refrain from interfering with the violence of the Jew-baiters but in many cases they connived at and aided them. The "twenties" saw widespread agitation against the Jews, outbreaks of violence, the sacking of Jewish houses, synagogues and business premises, the exclusion of Jews from the public services, municipal and governmental, the closing of the universities against them, special and ruinous taxation, disorders fomented by students who attacked young Jews of both sexes whose sole crime was a desire to acquire learning, raids on Jewish quarters, assaults and an occasional murder resulting in the invariable acquittal of the assailants who were hailed as national heroes. All this coincided with the economic depression which, in those days, Roumania shared with the rest of Europe and for which the Jew was, as always, the convenient and very acceptable scapegoat; it coincided, too, with the rise of Adolf Hitler, the spread of Nazi doctrines and the Nazi subsidies to Codreanu's Iron Guard and the anti-semitic Press of Roumania, then heavily engaged in a crusade of hatred against the Jews.

Such was the condition of Roumania in respect of her Jewish minority when Carol the Second ascended the throne in 1930. He inherited a state discredited as a breaker of solemn international pledges, sunk deeply in the mire of racial hatred and debased by a long history of anti-semitism which had penetrated so profoundly into the national consciousness that no section was unaffected by it. It may be safely asserted that every element in the state, the Court, the political parties, the army (in which the Jews were obliged to serve but were barred from holding any rank), and the people,

peasantry and artisans, was infected with the virus of Jew hatred manifested in every sphere of the national life and by every form of repression, from bodily persecution to the cruelty of discriminatory legislation. Anti-semitism was a deeply embedded feature of the Roumanian national character.

In these circumstances it would have been altogether remarkable if Carol had himself escaped being bitten by the germ of anti-semitism; it was probably in his blood no less than in that of most of his subjects and especially in that of his caste, brought up and taught to regard the Jew as an evil excrescence on the body politic. In his ambition to achieve the maximum authority of kingship, he demonstrated the zeal and the capacity to sweep away what he conceived to be abuses in the state and the men whom he regarded as guilty of them and of standing in his way. In accomplishing what was in reality a royal autocracy "in the best interests" of his people, he was scrupulous, throughout his career as King, in seeking to give sanction to his acts by an ostensible observance of constitutional forms and the trend of opinion among his subjects. It is true that, on occasion, he flew in the face of both, but he justified this on the plea of exceptional and critical circumstances; even then, he was careful to superimpose on his actions and policies, the semblance of constitutionalism. It would have required exceptional boldness and magnanimity of character, in an exceptional degree, to resist and to eradicate centuries old national obsession encrusted and reinforced by half a century and more of legislative enactment. Carol was bold but not bold enough to fly in the face of so intensely ingrained a passion as anti-semitism; nor was he so magnanimous as to alleviate the lot of a minority branded by the law as "foreigners" and outlaws and against whom popular passions had been incited and inflamed to regard as the enemies of state and people. To champion the Jews would have meant setting himself up against and antagonising the whole of his people, and to hand to his political enemies the surest instrument and the sharpest weapon with which to assail him and his authority. As it was, the most potent method of attack against him used by the Iron Guard and his other opponents was to accuse him, as they did, of surrounding himself with Jewish friends and of being, in consequence, the protagonist and under the influence of the Jews. The fact is that, while there is little evidence that Carol was basically anti-semitic, he was anything but a friend of the Jews. On the contrary, his reign is marked by repeated acts of repression against them, some new and others intensifying existing barbarities. While he ruthlessly suppressed rebellious manifestations in the general political sphere he did nothing to stamp out violence against the Jews; indeed, his governments were guilty of conniving at them and were often suspected of encouraging them as an outlet for political discontents. Thus, the Iron Guard was rarely interfered

with, far less brought to book, in the many savage onslaughts on the Jews during Carol's reign.

Within two years of his coming to the throne, the new Nationality Law of 1924 flaunting defiance of the Minorities Treaty was intensified by more severe restrictions of the civil status of the Jews and many more of them were made "stateless"; and there followed many further disabilities by which the Jews were removed from so many spheres of economic activity that their means of livelihood were reduced to the barest minimum and life for them became uncertain and intolerable. As the Iron Guard grew in ominous strength, the acquiescence of Carol's governments in the perpetration of anti-Jewish excesses and outrages increased. "So formidable a position has Codreanu attained that the Government has made no attempt to curb his activities. Even when he addressed a memorandum of astounding insolence in November, 1936, to King Carol, requesting that his Ministers should declare that they would answer with their heads if their foreign policy involved their country in war, and that the King should make a similar declaration, nobody dared to lift a hand against him".¹ Legal action against the Jews in addition to boycott movements ruined many Jewish enterprises and, with heavy taxation, drove many Jews to suicide. In 1934, the "Law for the Protection of National Labour" added further miseries to the already hopeless lot of the Jews. Ostensibly for the "protection" of Roumanian citizens, it enacted that every enterprise should reduce the number of "foreign" workers to a 20 per cent quota; it operated primarily against the Jews because they were not Roumanians "by blood". Similar impoverishment of the Jews took place in the successive campaigns to oust them from the professions, culminating in 1937 in various measures of the legal and other faculties, without interference on the part of the Government, excluding Jews from membership.

During Carol's reign the momentum of anti-semitism in Roumania increased, largely under the influence of the rise of Hitler in Germany and the spread of his doctrines far beyond the frontiers of the Reich. Other European countries notorious for their Jew-baiting policies, especially those adjacent to or in the neighbourhood of Germany, derived encouragement and boldness from the success of the racial mania of the Nazis. Naturally, the Roumanian anti-semites led by the agitator Professor of Economics of Jassy University, Cuza, as the spiritual leader, and by Codreanu as the leader of the terrorist organisation, became emboldened in their crusades against the Jews. Germany took a directing hand in the sinister game of promoting rebellious uprising under the guise of "purifying" the Roumanian state of its Jews. By 1938, the Nazis were in control of the bulk of the Roumanian press which they subsidised, by direct subventions, but more by suborning proprietors

¹ "The Jews in Roumania" : *The Nineteenth Century and After*; March, 1938.

and editors through large-scale advertising of unwanted and often fictitious products. This prostituted press, consisting of about forty daily and one hundred weekly newspapers, the most important of which was Codreanu's *Porunca Vremii* (Order of the Time) conducted a systematic campaign to induce Carol's government to take ruthless and drastic measures to eliminate the Jews from the state. Under their influence, physical violence steadily increased and developed into well-organised pogroms. Carol and his government energetically combated internal disorder when it was directed against the King's authority but they made little, if any, effort to stop its anti-semitic manifestations; sometimes there was good reason to suspect that they encouraged them. Local authorities especially gave support to Iron Guard hooliganism against the Jews and often deliberately fomented it. Their masters in Bucharest rarely interfered.

The climax of Carol's toleration of, if not connivance at, Roumanian anti-semitism came with his nomination, in December, 1937, of the notorious Goga Government, despite the fact that at the preceding elections the "National Christian Party" which thus came to power gained less than ten per cent of the votes, and was therefore wholly disqualified from the privilege of forming a government. Goga proclaimed his policy, openly and unashamed, as designed to rid Roumania of the Jews. Indeed, he had no other policy to offer; his government was quite simply anti-semitic and nothing else. When I interviewed this fussy little old man in January, 1938, he had had little else to talk about than the Jews and the measures he proposed to deal with them. His plans were quite simple and he propounded them with a naïve directness. He told me:

"We have 500,000 vagabond people (the Jews) whom we cannot regard as Roumanian citizens. My first measure will be to declare that we cannot take responsibility for retaining this people in our State life.

Roumania is tolerant towards her minorities, but after the war we had a large invasion of Jews, refugees from the Russian revolution, from Hungary after the Bela Kun revolution, and then Admiral Horthy's regime; after the Russo-Polish war, from Germany, and individual Jewish penetration into Roumania as a 'new California'."

The second part of this statement was completely false. The vast bulk of the Jews, numbering some tens of thousands, who escaped from Russia, emigrated chiefly to America, and merely passed through Roumania. The alleged flight from Hungary was a solid fabrication, for there was, in fact, an emigration into Hungary from Roumania. Of the exodus from Germany, only a few hundred Jews remained in Roumania. "According to the official statistical

returns, the total immigration into Roumania from 1930 to 1936 inclusive was only 29,058 and the emigration was 38,999, which means a diminution of nearly 10,000."¹ Goga, however, proceeded to carry his policy into effect. His first measure was to repudiate Roumania's obligations under the Minorities Treaty. A special decree of January 21, 1938, announced the entire revision of the citizenship rights of the Jews and this revision was not to be confined, as in the law of 1924, to the new territories. All Jews were required to furnish documentary proof of their claim to citizenship, with the sole exception of the Jewish veterans of the Balkan War of 1913. The fact that few Jews (and few Roumanian Christians) could produce such proof meant their outlawry—and that was the intention, for Goga knew full well the impossibility of finding, at the best of times, documentary proof of most things in Roumania.

Goga's government lived only forty-five days after having almost ruined the country through the disruption of the national finances. Jewish businesses were closed down, under threat of confiscation and "Roumanisation"; with them many non-Jewish enterprises collapsed; capital took precipitate flight abroad; Roumania's stocks in foreign markets dropped to catastrophe level. Goga's collapse was facilitated by stern warnings from Britain and France that Treaty obligations were expected to be observed. Though the almost insane old anti-semitic died politically (and soon after physically), the evils he had wrought lived after him. Roumanian Jew-baiting in 1938 was too much part of Roumania to disappear with the political demise of a comic though mischievous Premier. King Carol maintained that he had nominated Goga to give his people a taste of Fascism and, by thus demonstrating how ruinous Fascism could be, to deal a death blow to the Iron Guard and all its works. It is quite probable that Carol, like so many others, failed to realise that Fascism and anti-semitism were twin scourges and that an attempt to destroy the former while leaving the latter alive left the basic disease uncured. If Carol were sincere in his assurances of hostility to Fascism (and I believe he was), he was equally sincere in his persistence in continuing or permitting the continuance of anti-semitic acts as a measure of appeasement of the large and dangerous elements in his state and because he simply could not divest himself of so deeply based a national characteristic and tradition as Jew baiting.

So, the biting winds of the "cold" pogrom continued to blow over the wretched "Straini Fara Protectie", the Jews of Roumania. The Nationality Laws were still further "revised" to ensure more extensive debasement of the status of Jews; there were new and rigorous regulations for the "purification" of Roumanian trades and the professions—which meant depriving scores of thousands of already impoverished Jews of the means of living. For good measure,

¹ "The Jews in Roumania": *The Nineteenth Century and After*, March, 1938.

the Iron Guard threw in a reign of terror, driving the Jews from the villages into the crowded ghettos of the towns, desecrating their synagogues, burning, destroying and robbing their homes and places of business. The Roumanian intellectuals exhibited their love of learning by assaulting Jewish students of the Universities and driving them from the lecture rooms. To the average Roumanian, attacking the Jews, in one form or another, was as much part of his make-up as the addiction of the average Briton or American to the national ball games.

Carol cannot escape responsibility for this time-old concomitant of tyranny. His new "National" government, formed two weeks after Goga's fall, had as its Prime Minister the Patriarch Miron Christea, a former member of the Regency Council. This venerable and orthodox prelate had spread the Christian faith by encouraging his flock to hate the Jews. Only a few months before, he instilled Christian love among his people by proclaiming that the Jews were "living on the back of other people and on our own back, on the back of Roumania, like parasites". One of his bishops, the Bishop of Hotin, followed his Patriarch's lead by calling on his people to boycott the Jews so that "they shall die of hunger".

When I discussed the Jewish question in Roumania with King Carol during the early days of the Goga Government, in January, 1938, he exhibited the innate attitude towards the Jews held by his subjects of all classes. He appeared unable to divest himself of all the well-worn prejudices and even made use of the customary clichés which went in the name of facts relating both to the extent and nature of the problem itself and to the inferences to be drawn from them. He was, it is true, much less violent in his approach to the Jewish question than most of the Roumanian politicians and he attempted quite sincerely to mitigate the virulence of Goga whose Jew mania had roused European and American opinion against Roumania. Carol, as usual, essayed to employ his habitual skill in adopting a "betwixt and between" attitude with regard to the Jews so as to placate the anti-semitic extremists at home and, at the same time, to allay the suspicions of democratic opinion abroad. In so far as he endeavoured to appear conciliatory towards the Jews, he was quite unsuccessful; the long-suffering Jewish minority derived cold comfort from what he told me.

Carol's reply, when I drew his attention to the Jewish question and to the drastic measures which Goga had threatened to take against the Jews, was:

"The question of the Jews in Roumania is the principal factor in the situation. It cannot be denied that there is a strong anti-semitic feeling in the country. That is an old question in our history.

The measure to be taken to deal with it is on the principle of revision of citizenship for those Jews who entered the country after the war.

What happened was something in the nature of an invasion of Galician and Russian Jews who came in illegally. Their number has been exaggerated; some say as many as 800,000, but the maximum was about 250,000, who invaded the villages and are not a good element.

Can people be regarded as good citizens who entered the country by fraud? Those Jews who lived in Roumania before the war will remain untouched. But those who came after the war are without legal rights, except as refugees. About them we shall consider what we must do.

There is no question of expulsion. But public feeling is such that we cannot give legal rights to invaders. There is no reason for anxiety abroad on this matter. We shall not be rabid.

If we take certain measures which seem illogical to the British mind and not in accordance with civilisation, it should be borne in mind that our object is to save the remainder.

It is important to note that the Jews concerned, the invaders, do not come within the Minority treaties which apply only to citizens of legally transferred territories as the result of the war.

In this, as in other matters, the question for me is—should I break with or follow the public opinion of my country?

As for the future, my decisions will be based on what I consider best for my country and my people."

It was characteristic of the state of the Roumanian mind on the subject of the Jews that there was a serious discrepancy between Carol's and Goga's estimate of the number of Jewish "invaders". The Premier claimed the number to be 500,000, the King reduced the figure to 250,000. Both apparently forgot the Bulletin Démographique of Roumania of 1936, the official publication of the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Ministry of the Interior, which gave the total number of Jews in Roumania as 758,000. In 1910, the total number of Jews inhabiting all the territories afterwards included in Greater Roumania, that is the Roumania of Carol and Goga, was 850,000. Instead, therefore, of an "invasion" of Jews, there was, in fact, a considerable diminution in the Jewish population.

It was simply untrue to say, as Carol did, that "the Jews concerned, the invaders, do not come within the minority treaties". Those treaties specifically referred to the Jews who, by virtue of the annexation of the new territories, were automatically to acquire Roumanian citizenship. To "revise" their status was a clear violation of Roumania's international obligations. When Carol referred to the "illegal invasion" of Galician and Russian Jews he was

equally disregardful of the facts. An investigation and report of the Nansen Office of the League of Nations, in 1936, revealed that there were in Roumania not more than 11,000 Russian refugees, including non-Jews as well as Jews. Carol was frank, however, in stating that, in this question, he was following public opinion in his country on "an old question in our history".

Carol kept his word that there would be no expulsion of Jews. Whether he was sincere in stating that "we shall not be rabid" in the measures to be taken against the Jews is best judged by the actual measures which the Goga government promulgated within the next few weeks of my interview with the King. Jews were totally eliminated from the public services and were replaced by "pure Roumanians"; they were debarred from most professions and from certain types of business; they were prohibited from selling goods under State monopoly, such as alcohol, tobacco and matches; they were expropriated from all agricultural enterprises; they were prevented from undertaking any business in rural communities; businesses with Jewish capital or personnel were excluded from the State markets; they were prohibited from employing as domestic servants women under the age of forty; most of the Jewish doctors, engineers, architects, and lawyers were deprived of the right to pursue their avocations; all Jews were removed from the radio services, from the cinema and theatrical industry; the teaching of the Roumanian language and history was forbidden to Jews and other minorities, even in their own schools. These did not, by any means, exhaust the list of measures which, in the eyes of King Carol, were not "rabid". Their result was, however, that the Jews of Roumania faced utter ruin and hopelessness by reason of them; there was no measure of expulsion, but the clear intention of the government was to exclude the Jews totally from Roumanian national life. For this King Carol cannot claim to elude responsibility.

If Carol believed that anti-semitic repression would appease the Fascist terrorists who had wider and deeper designs than the persecution of the Jewish minority, he must have been sadly disillusioned and profoundly shocked. Anti-semitic measures did not, in the least, alleviate his own troubles or deter his opponents at home and, notably, in Nazi Germany, from pursuing their more fundamental purposes—to oust him from authority and throne. Like so many others in Europe and elsewhere, he did not appreciate that anti-semitism was not an end in itself, but only the easy avenue towards greater rapacities and crimes. Though his "National Renaissance Front" and, later, his "Party of the Nation" made further "revisions" of the Nationality Law to the detriment of those few remaining Jews who had escaped under the earlier edicts, though tyrannical local authorities were permitted to interpret these repressive measures according to their whim and to the

widespread suffering of the Jews in their jurisdiction, there was no real check on the real enemies of Roumania and of Carol; "appeasement" as usual, did not work, and although he had faithfully carried out the Jew-baiting policies of Cuza, Goga, Codreanu and Hitler he was pushed steadily and remorselessly down the fascist slope towards the collapse of his throne.

The entry of Roumania into the "Axis" in July, 1940, brought with it the inevitable onslaught upon the Jews, the first victims of the benefits of the "New Order". Immediately afterwards, the reign of terror against the Jews began; it has continued unbroken to this day. Jews in Nazi-controlled Roumania have been massacred by the tens of thousands; their property has been stolen; the last vestige of the remnants of their citizenship has been removed; as elsewhere in the European jungle of Nazi savagery, they have been reduced to the most abject conditions of the slave and the pariah.

Some indication of the fate that has befallen the Jews of Roumania, probably the most afflicted of all the Jewish communities of Europe, can be gained from this brief summary of their sufferings by the middle of 1941:

"The unofficial estimate is that from 4,000 to 6,000 persons were killed in Bucharest alone and 10,000 throughout the country during the revolt (the Iron Guard revolt under Horia Sima in 1940 after Carol left the country). Of the Bucharest victims, at least 1,000 were Jewish. Damage said to have been suffered by 1,500 Jewish families was placed at more than 350,000,000 lei (about £400,000) . . .

With Roumania in the Axis, Jewish life was doomed to inevitable, albeit 'disciplined' extinction. An even greater percentage of the roughly 450,000 Jews who live in the 'new' Roumania . . . must rely on funds from abroad and the aid of kinsmen who still have limited means.

The Russo-German war brought new hardships to the Jews of Roumania (increased in number once more with the re-occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina by German and Roumanian forces). Five hundred were said to have been executed as 'Communists' in the city of Jassy alone soon after the German attack began and by August 10,000 were said to have been killed. In August, too, the first ghetto was established in Kishinev, Bessarabia. All Jewish men from 18 to 50 years of age have been drafted for forced labour. Their daily food ration is one-eighth of that provided for a Roumanian soldier.

In September, the 30,000 Jews of Czernovitz were ordered into a ghetto. In October, clothes and linen belonging to Jews were confiscated and turned over to the army. Jews of Bucharest must do their shopping and marketing in one hour on weekdays . . . but only 'after the Roumanian population has satisfied its

needs . . . ' Last but not least, it has been reported that the famous Nuremberg Laws are to be introduced in Roumania.¹

Another bloody pogrom was reported to have taken place during Russo-Roumanian fighting in Bessarabia. The number of Jewish victims is as yet not known."²

What a pogrom against the Jews means can be seen from the description of this episode:

"The most horrible of these killings, the 'kosher butchery' of 200 Jews in the municipal slaughter-house of Bucharest by the Iron Guard legionnaires was described in a letter (published in the *New York Post* on February 19, 1941), which a mother of a slain Iron Guardist wrote to the editor of *Porunca Vremii*, the Iron Guard newspaper: 'I went to the slaughter-house. What I saw there I shall not forget for the rest of my life. I saw human beings hung up like animals. *I saw a little girl five years old, who was suspended by her feet from the hooks where the calves are hung. Her entire body was smeared with blood.* I ran away at the sight . . . went to the morgue . . . hundreds and hundreds of dead who no longer resembled human beings. I saw men whose tongues had been torn out. I saw women's bodies torn to pieces. I saw children whose corpses were smashed beyond recognition.'

The official account placed the number slain at 236 of whom 130 were said to be Jews. 254 were said to have been wounded, of whom 20 were Jews. However, the 'kosher butchery', that monstrous parody of the Jewish *Shehita* by cutting the throats of the Jews, and the shooting of 160 Jewish officials, would alone far exceed the official figures."²

POSTSCRIPT

JUNGLE

AS FAR BACK as June 23, 1941, when the Germans received orders to cross the Roumanian border and gathered in Jassy and Moldau, they claimed that passing Roumanian and German troops had been shot at, naturally by "Communists and Jews", since the two are identical in the German mind. Two days later an official communiqué appeared, containing the information that as an act of reprisal for having shot at passing troops, five hundred Jewish Communists had been executed. We knew that this officially admitted number sorely underestimated the actual figure. Actually

¹ The Nuremberg Laws have since been introduced and enthusiastically administered.

² *The Jews in Nazi Europe*: Institute for Jewish Affairs, November 1941.

it was established beyond a doubt that 7,900 Jews were mowed down by machine-gun fire on the fields of Jassy. Under cover of night, led by the local police, raids were made on Jewish homes, and men, boys and often women were bodily dragged out. When the Roumanian populace saw what a massacre they had caused they rose up in protest, and after the wholesale murder of the horrifying total of 7,900 people, the butchery stopped. However, a far greater number had already been arrested and were destined for the same death sentence. All this was the work of the Roumanian military forces. German officialdom played a silent, non-interfering rôle.

There were still a great number of Jews left who, through special intervention or dispensation, had escaped shooting. Two thousand of them were herded into freight trains, which had formerly been used for conveying carbide. There were 150 in each car and the car was then sealed and dispatched to a vague destination in Old Roumania and Oltenia—one hundred and fifty humans penned together, spending four days and nights without food or water, and without the most elemental facilities. Half-crazed people engaged in brawls. One eighteen-year-old boy, who thrust his hands out into the rain in order to get drinking water, had both hands shot off. After four days and nights, the train came to a stop and the doors were opened. One thousand and twenty corpses and 980 people in a state of total collapse were taken from the cars. These are facts—the undiluted truth—which are known to every Jew in Roumania to-day.

It is rumoured, though not yet substantiated, that in Bessarabia about 20,000 Jews were massacred. An official boasted to a traveller who was on his way to Bessarabia that 80 per cent of the Jews of that country had been wiped out and the remainder had either hidden or escaped. Thereupon the traveller replied, "Too bad, that the 20 per cent were left alive".

In Chisinav, which had an overwhelming majority of Jewish inhabitants, only 5-6,000 Jews remain. It is believed that many went along with the Russians, but that a great number were slain. Those who have remained behind, are mostly in concentration camps. Incidents have occurred in these concentration camps around Chisinav which are hair-raising and a strain on the credulity of the reader.

Four hundred and forty Jews were taken out of the concentration camp one day and on the next day only forty returned, among them women. They reported that 400 of their companions had been shot and the forty who remained alive were forced to bury the dead. They were told that the 400 had been shot as punishment for the shooting of four German soldiers and they were further warned that in the future, for every German or Russian soldier killed, 200 Jewish lives would be taken in reprisal.

Food is scarce, bread costs sixty lei a loaf, not everybody has the money with which to buy it. Those who do, naturally buy, with

the result that terrible brawls and fights break out, and people attack one another like wild animals.

When the Roumanians entered Bukovina, about 25,000 Jews became refugees and sought haven in a forest near Sicureni, without any facilities, means of shelter or money. To date 3,000 of these refugees have died. As far as it is possible, they receive assistance from Bucharest, but this is very difficult, since, immediately after the occupation of Bukovina and Bessarabia by the Roumanians, an ordinance was issued, forbidding all postal transmissions of money to Jews. Occasionally, there have been cases where Roumanians have been entrusted with money to deliver to Jews.

Right after the occupation of Cernauti by the Roumanians, letters were received from Dr. Landau and Dr. Orenstein, with the following information:

"Right after they entered Cernauti, the Roumanians seized the Jewish Hospital (which has a 150-bed capacity and the most modern equipment) and sent in an additional 222 mental patients from the district insane asylum, twenty tuberculosis patients, fifteen women in confinement, and a number of sick children. With equipment for 150 beds, the hospital now had to care for 450 patients, without resources and without the slightest possibility of raising funds in Cernauti—since there are in Cernauti about 7,500 Jews and beggars and no one has any surplus money."

Upon the entrance of the Russians into Cernauti, the rouble brought forty lei. When the Roumanians re-seized the district, they decreed that the populace, at the pain of death, turn in their roubles for leis, at a par rate. Thus, even the prosperous element suffered.

The lawyers and doctors, almost without exception, remained in Cernauti when the Russians took it over; a number of Bukovina Jews, who had been living in Bucharest, left for Cernauti when the Russians came, stating that they preferred to live under Russian domination and subsist on dry bread than to live under Roumanian rule and be considered below contempt. All of these Jews who left fine posts in Bucharest, and are now in Cernauti, all of them cultured and of the upper class, have now become beggared and can scarcely keep body and soul together.

Soon after the Roumanian machinery was set up, an ordinance was issued, making the wearing of the "Yellow Badge" compulsory. Dr. Filderman surpassed himself. Of course, he had the additional good fortune to be a former schoolmate of Antonescu.

On a certain day, the Jewish community was informed that the Yellow Badge had been introduced in all of Roumania. A sample was sent in with the strict injunction that in a few days the Yellow Badge must be ready and all Jews, men, women and children, were instructed to wear them. In Bukovina, this was immediately introduced. Women used the ruse of covering their badges with

their purses. This measure had a devastating effect on the mood in Bucharest, since it would have paralysed business. People wearing the Yellow Badge were barred from street cars. Furthermore, they would not have been able to go to any offices or approach any authorities. This decree drew a pall over and had a depressing effect upon the city.

Dr. Filderman was granted an interview with Antonescu and submitted a memorandum which was truly a masterpiece, and which succeeded in completely convincing Antonescu. Dr. Filderman's argument was: "As far as I know the Yellow Badge is worn only in German-occupied countries and as far as I know Roumania has not been occupied by Germany." This argument was a direct blow to Antonescu's pride and resulted in the abolition of the Yellow Badge.

Business and industry in the smaller towns have either completely collapsed, as far as Jews are concerned, or else Jewish-owned property in the villages and in the country, as well as houses and real estate, have been expropriated by the Roumanians. Jews were evacuated from their homes and were given promissory notes assuring them of reparation, years hence. So far no one has yet received a penny for his confiscated property. Industry, which for the greater part lay in Jewish hands, especially the textile branch, had to be Roumanianized. Commissioners, chosen from the Iron Legion, were appointed and later lost their posts after the Revolution. By an appointed time, proof had to be shown that industry had changed to Roumanian hands. Banks went over to German hands. Of the large banking houses, there remains only the Banca Romanesca. Most Jewish employees were discharged. In such industries and businesses where a Jew held a position which could not immediately be taken over by a Roumanian, the Jew was given a time limit in which to prepare the Roumanian for the new business. This time limit was till the end of the year, December 31, 1941, but it is probable that it will be extended to the 31st of April, 1942. As soon as the Roumanians master the new business, Jews are evicted. Most Jewish businesses were immediately transferred to Roumanians. Immovables were expropriated by the State. Those Jews who had served in the war had the right to submit a claim and furnish proof.

All other Jews who remained either in occupied territories or in Roumania, were excluded from this category. As soon as the Roumanian authorities realized that the confiscation of immovables would take a very long time, they issued a decree announcing that as from that date, all Jewish property (immovables) was to be considered State property. Jews living in their own homes were required to turn over the equivalent of their rent to the State. Boarders also had to turn over their rent to the State chest. Jewish property owners were permitted to live in their own homes until the 30th

of April (as long as they paid their rent to the State), after which time they had to leave their homes, which were then transferred to such Roumanians as had seen war service or otherwise earned favour from the State. A Commission to determine how to distribute and share the Jewish property and homes was established. It was decided that only those people could avail themselves of this property who were entitled thereto, according to the law. The property went to the highest bidder paying cash. Immediately after this decision was announced in the Press, Mihai Antonescu, who set up this Commission, minimized its activities, claiming that it was his intention that deserving Roumanians benefit by this property, even though they were not in a position to pay for it, as a compensation for their services. The following interesting headline appeared in the newspapers:

“ROUMANIANS, PUT IN YOUR APPLICATION IN
TIME FOR PROPERTY CONFISCATED FROM
THE JEWS”

Jews between the ages of eighteen and fifty, regardless of their educational background or the positions they held, were forced to work in the fields and to do street labour. They were cast into camps which were not fit for human habitation. Those people who worked in the vicinity of the railroad at least had some possibility of securing food. Those, however, who worked in the fields were totally lost. Everything was so disorganized and the authorities were so incompetent that they made no effort to place people needed in definite industries. One official would certify that Jew X was indispensable in the position which he held while, at the same time, the Jew was drafted by a recruiting officer for compulsory labour. Exceptions were made in cases of those Jews who were either unfit for military service or those who had received dispensation from the War Ministry since they worked in war industries.

Doctors and lawyers were also recruited for forced labour. Later a dispensation was issued for doctors and it was declared unnecessary that they do such work. Instead, they practised their professions in the Jewish concentration camps. Radios and telephones were forbidden to all Jews.

In Bucharest, there are no cafés or restaurants with signs “Jews Forbidden”, in contrast to Brasov, where there are any number of hotels, restaurants, etc., displaying this sign. In the railroad station of Brasov, there hangs a large sign “Tickets will not be sold to Jews. They travel in the interests of espionage; they are Communists”.

Although life in Bucharest, though under pressure, went along normally until about a week ago, at that time a decree was issued

in Bukovina that all Jews there as well as in the South of Bukovina, without exceptions, were to leave the country. A house to house notification was given, that each individual would be allowed ten kilograms of baggage and 5,000 leis, and was to present himself at the railroad station. These Jews were sent to Transistra. The 57,000 Jews in Cernauti were informed that by six o'clock in the evening they were to present themselves at the railroad station, where a ghetto encampment would be established. It looked like a funeral train. No one spoke a word. The Archbishop of Cernauti came to Bucharest, of his own free will, with several other Roumanians of Bukovina who still possessed a spark of human feeling. The Archbishop appealed to Mihai Antonescu and declared that this act was a disgrace and that the Roumanians would one day suffer for it. He succeeded in inducing Mihai Antonescu to countermand the order. At six o'clock, Antonescu telephoned that the Jews be brought to a ghetto. On the next day, it was discovered that he had ordered that all the Jews be sent by train to Transistria. On that day there were thirty suicides. It is believed that most of the Jews took morphine with them in order to end their lives, should anything happen to them on their trip. In Cernauti, patients were taken bodily from the hospital. In Bucharest panic ensued as a result of the reports brought or sent by friends and relatives in the provinces. There is not one Jew in Bucharest who does not want to emigrate. Some people are even prepared to give 1,000,000 lei for a Turkish transit-visa.

Rumour has it that *all* Jews who were not born in Bucharest, especially the Bessarabian and Bukovinian Jews (who are threatened with the same fate as the Jews of Cernauti) must leave the city.¹

EPILOGUE

"ON THE DEPARTURE OF KING CAROL"

"IT IS AN elementary duty of honour to recall the love with which he was summoned, at one time, by the entire nation and to recognise the great efforts he made as our ruler to strengthen and develop our country.

"If, today, unforeseen circumstances have made his reign unpopular, a reign which cannot yet be judged in the correct perspective, we cannot treat the man before whom, until yesterday, we used to bow our heads, as would these base people who worship today what they will stone tomorrow.

¹ The foregoing is a textual extract from a report, "The Situation in Roumania", issued in New York by the World Jewish Congress on January 27, 1942. Later reports are even more horrible.

"Misfortune has its own rights. So has the worst man in the world and, even more, the man who, for so many years, was the beloved King of our country and whose decade of hard work we have been prevented, by tragic circumstances, from celebrating."

These words appeared on the front page of the Bucharest newspaper *Neamul Romanesc* ("The Roumanian People") on September 9, 1940, two days after King Carol the Second left Roumania as a dethroned and exiled monarch. They were bold words, uttering sentiments that, in those days of crisis, were dangerous to write and bordered perilously on treason. They were written when there ruled in Carol's stead, as Dictator in name but, in fact, as vassal of Hitler, the traitorous General Ion Antonescu who, in unseating his sovereign, had heaped obloquy on his head and roused the nation to hurl imprecations upon him and all his works. In these critical days, few men dared utter the name of Carol save in terms of denunciation and abuse, for the order had gone forth that he, with the aid of the enemies of his people, had disrupted his state through misrule and despoiled his nation through craft and greed. Surrounding "Red Dog" Antonescu and exultant in the seats of power were the men of the Iron Guard, led by Horia Sima, accomplice and adjutant of Codreanu, flushed with the triumph of having defeated and destroyed the King who, for so long, had thwarted their rebellious designs, subdued their organization and killed their leader on a lonely wayside. Amid the incitements spread at the behest of their Nazi masters, through the Press, the Radio and the violent demagoguery of the rebels who had seized the state, a sullen and enraged people, embittered by the loss of half their kingdom, understood no more than to revile the sovereign, "the Renaissance King", whose ten years' reign was now represented as a black era for "holy Roumania".

The man with the courage to indite and sign his full name to these words, in defence of and tribute to a king shorn of repute and held in infamy, was Nicolai Jorga, University professor, scholar, author and politician, the most outstanding genius produced by Roumania. This impressive figure, known as "the standard-bearer of the Roumanian ideal", was then in his seventieth year. He was revered in his country as its greatest historian and one of its most fearless statesmen. Famed throughout the whole world of learning as the author of more than 2,000 works of profound scholarship, on history, politics, poetry and the drama, Jorga achieved renown in Roumania as a patriot of unusual sincerity, ability and independent judgment. He owed allegiance to no party and pursued his own path in the attainment of the ideal of "Roumanian National Unity" of which he was the devout and the most persistent advocate. Though, as professor and politician, he was the teacher of almost all Roumania's leading political figures in this century, Jorga was always the severest critic of all parties in power who failed to

pursue the policies which, in his judgment, were essential to the unity of "Greater Roumania". He never succeeded in attracting any political following, though, from time to time, he offered his collaboration "in the national interests" to various parties. Throughout almost the whole of his political life, he maintained the rôle of the "One Man Opposition" in the Roumanian Parliament. Jorga was no democrat by conviction; indeed, at times, he was the protagonist of the reaction inherent in national extremism. He was a rabid and uncompromising anti-Semite and shared with Alexander Cuza the leadership and inspiration of all the elements who sought the "salvation" of their country through the humiliation and hatred of the Jews. There were times, however, when Jorga exhibited a curious tendency towards a liberal outlook. He became a member of the one party with democratic ideas, the National Peasant Party of Iuliu Maniu, but his membership was of brief duration. He abandoned Maniu because he held the party to be not a peasant organization, but a party of small-town lawyers promoting their own petty interests.

Of Maniu, the ascetic Victorian bachelor who frowned acidly upon Carol for his association with Lupescu and who joined with the Fascist Iron Guard and Hitler's "Gauleiter" Antonescu to destroy the King, Jorga wrote, on September 15, 1940, these biting sentences in *Neamul Romanesc*, his newspaper:

"There is no revolution without its Robespierre.

Such a man is always a good talker, a good lawyer who, as a politician, stands for morality before all else.

He is a man who cannot have committed any sin, who has an immaculately pale face, who believes that he can prove to everyone at all times that he has never made a mistake.

He is a man who has lived a long life without having committed the crime of falling in love with a woman, without having cast his affection upon a child, without having had even a faithful dog by his side, without having sprayed a drop of water on a flower; far less has he touched, with admiring hand, a piece of sculpture, raised his eyes to a painting, or lifted his heart at the sound of a melody.

He is a man cold, dominant and cruel.

He is a man who cannot understand that he has reached a ripe old age without knowing the blessings of the married state and without having smiled over a cradle—a greater crime from the point of view of morals than the casual errors of a married man.

And he is a man who will not admit that it is more despicable not to have been faithful to a single friend or to have made no personal sacrifice than to have fallen victim to the lures which surround us in this world."

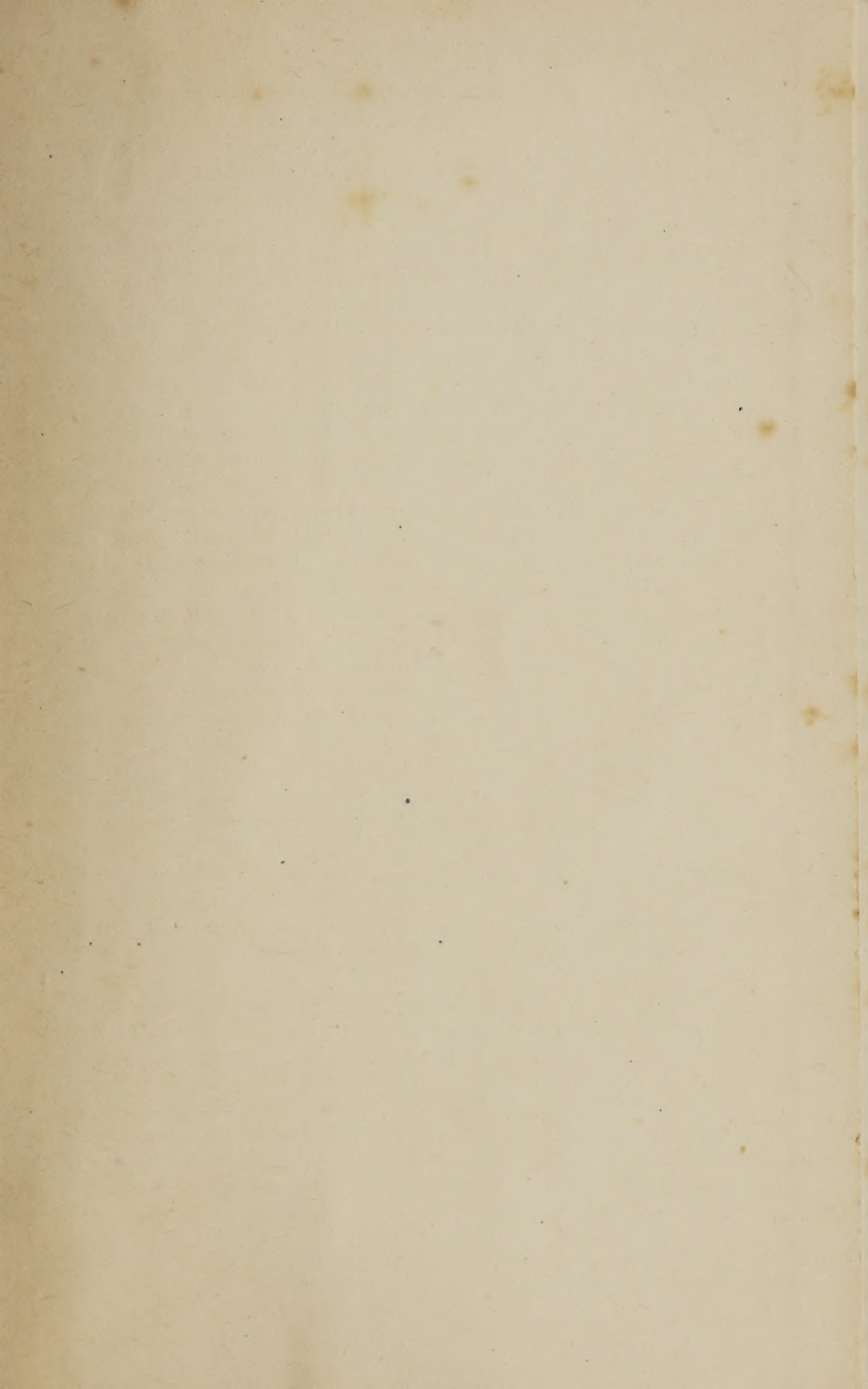
Carol, whom Jorga taught his history and who learned from him his first lessons in politics, had no more severe, though just, critic than this rare, if erratic, genius. Time and again he railed, with sonorous disapproval, against the King who had been his pupil, when he made errors of policy and faulty decisions at variance with the "ideals of national unity". In all the crises of Carol's life, however, when he was beset by unscrupulous enemies, Jorga stood by his sovereign, for he never ceased to declare that, with all his faults and maladjustments of character, Carol had the quality of statesmanship and the capacity to rule. The stubborn old scholar was a friend of the King, often the "candid friend"; though inclined to reaction, he arraigned and denounced the Iron Guard as the corrupters of the nation, the sowers of discord and the disturbers of "national unity". In *Neamul Romanesc* his pen wrote razor-edged eloquence in denunciation against Codreanu, and his words cut deep wounds of resentment and hatred in the minds of "Capitanul's" followers. The defiantly bold sentences of the "leaders" on the front page of *Neamul Romanesc*, signed "Nicolai Jorga", were a direct challenge to the enemies of Carol as well as a defence of him.

When the Iron Guard seized the government of Roumania, under Antonescu, its members took a solemn pledge to avenge the death of Codreanu and to settle accounts with all those who had dared to stand in his path. Nicolai Jorga was among the first of those upon whom vengeance was to be taken and to a special group of "Patriots" was assigned the task of punishment.

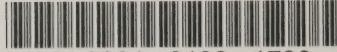
One evening in the early weeks of the "New Order" in Roumania, a group of armed men, in the green uniform of the Iron Guard, burst into the country-house at Sinaia, as the old man of seventy sat at his desk in his study. They fell upon the "Patriarch of the Roumanian People" and dragged him out of the house to the dark road outside. As he lay on the ground, they cut off his famous flowing white beard, riddled him with bullets, cut his throat, stabbed the already-lifeless body and threw it into a sodden ditch by the wayside.

When the torn, beardless corpse of Nicolai Jorga was discovered the next morning, there was found, stuffed in his mouth, a copy of *Neamul Romanesc*, dated September 9, 1940, containing the signed "leader" entitled: "On the departure of King Carol".

Thus did Roumania, under Hitler's "New Order" directed by the Nazi Gauleiter "Red Dog" Antonescu, achieve the "moral restoration" which this Roumanian general swore to his King, Mihail, to be the holy cause of the overthrow of Carol the Second.



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